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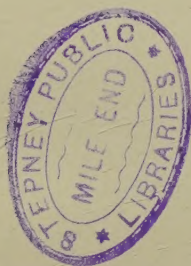
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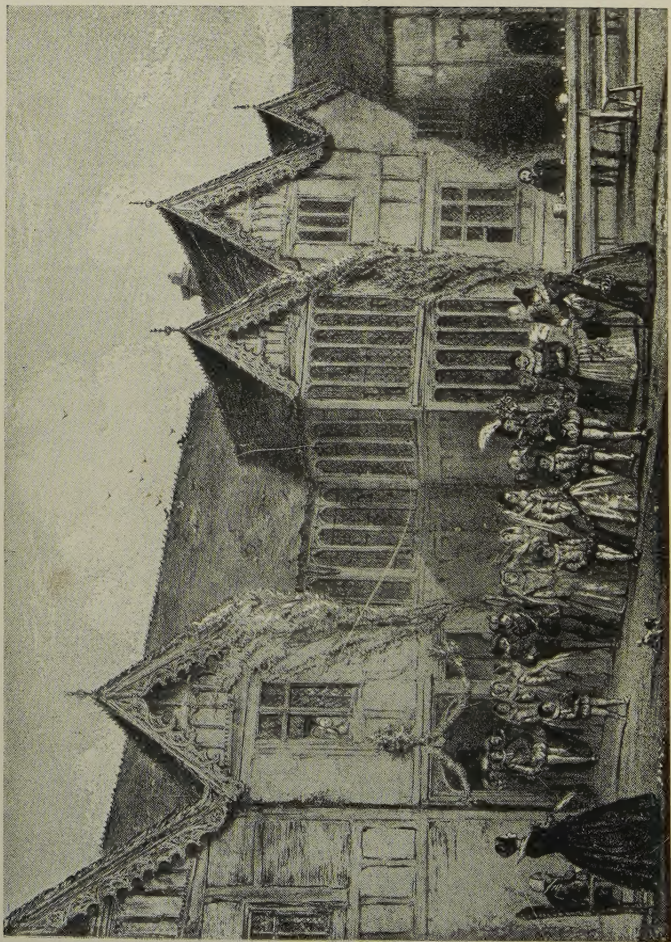
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METROPOLITAN
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BYWAYS IN BERKSHIRE
AND THE COTSWOLDS





Ockwells.

Frontispiece.

BYWAYS IN BERKSHIRE AND THE COTSWOLDS

BY

P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A., F.S.A.

Author of "The Counties of England," "The Old English
Country Squire," "London Survivals," etc.

LONDON: ROBERT SCOTT
ROXBURGHE HOUSE
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To

CHARLES EDWARD KEYSER, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., D.L.
PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
AND OF THE BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
OF ALDERMASTON COURT, BERKSHIRE.

Dear Bro. Keyser,—

It is fitting that I should dedicate to you this book which treats of a country we have often explored together. Many are the delightful days we have spent in roaming among our Berkshire villages and towns, and migrating into the region of the Cotswolds. I have valued greatly your companionship and friendship, and no one has done half so much as you have in elucidating the architectural features of our village churches, and in recording their history writ in stone.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

P. H. DITCHFIELD.

FOREWORD

THERE is no more delightful region in England wherein to wander than the Berkshire Downs and the Cotswold Hills. I have known them intimately for forty years, and have found that

Age cannot wither nor custom stale
Their infinite variety.

Like England itself it is "a land of just and old renown," full of lore and legend, of thick forests, now feeling the weight of the woodmen's axes, of bare wind-swept downs, of lovely villages and fair towns, of sturdy, kind-hearted peasants, slow of foot, but brave and fearless, as the record of this and of many other wars have shown. I have lived amongst them forty years and never had a wrong word with them.

I have wandered where I listed through Windsor Forest, along the Thames highway, through the countries of Mary Russell Mitford and Charles Kingsley, and again on the Berkshire Downs and along the White Horse Vale. Through Faringdon I shall conduct the reader to the delightful region of the Cotswolds, and from Birdlip Hill view that delectable land as Moses did the plains of Palestine from Pisgah's height. I have not exhausted the subject, and another volume would have been needed wherein to describe all that might be seen in these wanderings; but perhaps I have written enough to interest the reader in one of the most delectable parts of England, portions of which are little known and of which, save of the Cotswolds in recent years, not much has been written.

As the Editor of twenty-three volumes of the *Berks, Bucks*

and *Oxon Archæological Journal*, of the *Memorials of Old Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire*, and joint Editor of *The Victoria County History of Berkshire*, and the Author of *Oxfordshire* (Cambridge University Press), of *Bygone Berkshire*, and other local publications, and as Hon. Secretary of the Berks Archæological Society for thirty years, I have explored most of the country treated of in this volume and know it well. The volumes of the transactions of local societies, the Newbury District Field Club, the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, and the Oxfordshire Archæological Society have been useful to me, and also Dr. Cox's excellent *Little Guide* to Gloucestershire, and the volumes of the *Highways and Byways Series* relating to the district. I am also indebted to the valuable monographs on some of our Berkshire churches, contributed by the President of our Society, Mr. Charles Edward Keyser, M.A., F.S.A., with which he has enriched the pages of the journal which I edit in conjunction with my friend, Mr. John Hauntenville Cope. Mr. Thacker's *The Stripling Thames*, Archdeacon Hutton's *By Thames and Cotswold*, Tighe and Hopkins's *History of Windsor, Windsor Forest*, by G. M. Hughes, have been consulted, and many other works both ancient and modern, including those of Charles Kingsley, Miss Mitford and Tom Hughes, which are too numerous to be all recorded here.

P. H. DITCHFIELD.

BARKHAM RECTORY.

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Part I

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN
WINDSOR FOREST



12





BYWAYS IN BERKSHIRE AND THE COTSWOLDS

I

Windsor Forest

THERE is no forest in England like unto Windsor Forest, none so steeped in romance and legend, in old story of kings and queens and mighty hunters, in love of lords and ladies, of rangers and keepers, like him of Chaucer's day—

I read you by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the King's green wood.

Ghostly horns shiver through the trees, and the shades of the dappled deer dart past us, as we explore its recesses. It is the region of some of the finest woodland scenery in the world. Not Dante's lovely pinewoods of Ravenna, nor the grand primeval forests of the New World, can surpass its beauty, these homeland scenes of pleasant woods, stretches of heather-clad commons, and fern-covered slopes crowned by giant beeches, and green pasture land and corn fields, and parks that are many surrounding great houses, where men have dwelt who have grants of land, assarts and purpres-tures by the favour of their sovereign.

It partakes of the nature of England's self, and is as dear to each British heart as the whole land is.

Is there a corner of land, a furze-fringed rag of a by-way,

Coign of your foam-white cliffs, or swirl of your grass-green waves
Leaf of your peaceful copse, or dust of your strenuous highway

But in our hearts is sacred, dear as our cradles, our graves ?

The forest country is varied. Those unlearned in forest lore imagine that a forest must be a continuous wood,

The nodding horror of whose shady brows

Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger ;

but that is a popular error. A forest is, according to the dictum of those who are learned in the law, "a territory bounded by unremovable marks, or by prescription, in which beasts and fowls of forest, chase and warren, abide under the protection of the king." According to another authority "it is the highest franchise of princely pleasure." The trees do not make the forest, but the law of the land determined that the forest was set apart for the hunting of the sovereign, and for those who received the royal permission to hunt therein.

Such was Windsor Forest haunted by the memory of the stark Conqueror William, of ill-omened name, who dearly loved hunting and who, as the scribe of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle asserts, "made large forests for deer, and enacted laws therein, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade the killing of the deer, so also the boars ; and he loved the tall stags as though he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares, that they should go free."

Forests were made to wander in, at least they are so in modern days, when there are no such fearful penalties as loss of life or limb, no horrid mantraps or spring-guns to startle or to maim ; and as a wanderer in this Windsor Forest I claim my right to wander as I list, in history, lore, legend,

or topography, and cull what pleases me, disregarding the beaten track so worn by many weary pilgrims.

It was at one time of vast extent, this forest. It extended its sway over parts of Buckinghamshire and Middlesex, nearly the whole of Surrey and the eastern and southern parts of Berkshire, as far as Hungerford, while the Vale of Kennett was deemed anciently to be within its borders. When the Norman kings were tyrannical and all-powerful, they extended the limits of the hunting ground ; but when the young King Henry III came to the throne and the Barons were stronger than he, they wrested from him some of these unlawfully acquired additions, which were in 1225 disafforested. The Forest of Berkshire, *extra forestam de Windsor*, was joined to that of Windsor ; and if you would desire to perambulate this, and beat the bounds, after the fashion of some mayors and vicars and churchwardens of their respective towns and villages, you would be obliged to make a long journey. You would begin at Reading town, where the Kennet river falls into the Thames, and proceed almost due west, following the course of the former river to a spot above Padworth, where the Enborne (styled Aleburn in the Patent Roll of 3 Henry III) falls into the Kennet. Thence the boundary follows this stream to Hyde End and then to Woodhay where it rises. Proceeding onwards we come to Inkpen, which has no connexion with scribes and authors but means "Inga's pen" for cattle, and then along a green land northwards, to Chilton Foliat by Hungerford, whence we follow the boundary line between Berkshire and Wiltshire along the course of the stream denoted *Lenta* in the Roll, but which we now call the Cole, until it joins the Thames. This stately river forming the boundary between Berkshire and Oxfordshire was also the border of the Forest. Thus four-fifths of the county of Berks constituted the Berkshire forest and one-fifth comprised the Windsor forest, which as I have stated, extended into the surrounding shires. On the

south-west lay the great New Forest formed by the Conqueror, and the chases of Waltham and Cranborne and the wide tract of Salisbury Plain; so that a very large tract of country was set apart for the King's hunting. The saintly Edward the Confessor had granted this Windsor district to the monks of Westminster; but when William came, and after burning Southwark marched to Wallingford, he saw that it was a delightful country for the chase; so he took the land into his own possession, exchanging it for other manors more remote. The Conqueror had a little trouble with other ecclesiastics in carrying out his plans. The monks of Abingdon possessed the manor of Winkfield, consisting of four hides; and they complained bitterly that this land had been enclosed within the forest and made subject to the severity of forest law. But they found the governor of Windsor Castle too strong for them, and were bound to yield to superior force.

This wide district was a forest of nature ages before it became a legal forest under the rule of Norman kings. It was the great "Frith," a lonely unfrequented region wherein deer and wolf and wild boars roamed, and Celtic folk pastured their flocks and fashioned their earthworks on the hills to guard their tracks and pit-dwellings. The Romans cut their way through it by their road which led from London through Staines (*ad Pontes*) to Silchester, the *Calleva Atrebatum*, the stronghold of that powerful British tribe, and thence to Bath and the West of England. We can trace that road now. The Saxons when they came to our shores wondered at this evidence of a civilization that had passed away, and could only attribute it to the work of some powerful demon, Grim; so they called it the Devil's Highway, or the Devil's Causeway.

This ancient thoroughfare, often trodden by Roman legions, Roman and Gaulish merchants and traders, enters Berkshire at the north-east corner of Bagshot Park and just off the Bagshot and Bracknell road, and there you will find

Rapley's Farm. In one of the fields, called in the ordnance map Roman Down, many Roman remains were found about a century and a half ago, showing that it was the site of a Roman station of some importance. With some difficulty we trace the road's course through woods between Windlesham and Duke's Hill, and next pick it up as a broad grass drive beyond the lake which lies to the south of the farm, showing that somewhere near this it must have changed its course. We were always told in our youth that Roman roads ran straight from place to place, but this is a delusion. The Romans were wise folk, and not so foolish as to sacrifice the advantages of level tracks and firm ground to a passion for straightness.

We have far to travel and I do not propose to ask you to accompany me along its whole course. We lose it here and there, where the lie of the ground has been much altered of late years, but find it again along forest tracts, an earthwork as on Tower Hill, cuttings on the sides of hills, and ditches well defined proclaiming its presence. Sometimes you have to exercise the cunning of a Red Indian tracker to discover this road; in other places it is as plain as a pikestaff. We see a little off the road a collection of very ancient thorn bushes known as Wickham Bushes, where was the site of an old Romano-British village. Coins, broken pottery, tiles and iron nails have been found here in abundance, and I have spent some adventurous days in digging there. The boys of Wellington College have found much therein, and my friend, Mr. Hawker, has discovered some fine Roman coins ranging from A.D. 117 to 383.

The site was explored by Mr. Handasyd in 1783, and this learned antiquary's researches are recorded in *Archæologia*. It has been called "the Town." Captain Kempthorne, in his pamphlet on "The Devil's Highway" suggests that it was a village settlement of poorer classes living in wattled sheds; but there must have been timber-built houses, as quantities

of nails have been discovered. The finding of iron binding, bolts and hinges, shows that the doors were solid, and keys have been recovered. Among personal ornaments found here I may mention a buckle, safety-pin brooch, bangle, snake-shaped ring, a small cameo representing Hermes with a cornucopia and sheaves of corn; and among the household utensils there were several of black Upchurch ware, amphoræ, mortaria, handmills, Samian ware and fragments of glass. Roman coins of the Emperors Probus, Marius and Delmaticus have been discovered.

Near this is a large irregular entrenchment called Cæsar's Camp, though Julius Cæsar never set his foot there. It is surrounded by a double rampart on all sides. From its irregular shape it is supposed to be of British origin, but was probably used afterwards by the Romans as a *castrum æstivum*. This is the only camp of importance in Eastern Berkshire. It is shaped like an oak-leaf, and was defended by a vallum and fosse, and in most places by an outside vallum also. The principal entrance was on the south, but there was also another on the north. A silver coin of Cunobelin has been found here. It is a very lovely spot wherein to linger awhile, though pines have been planted there and somewhat obscure the view.

It is impossible not to regret the necessity which the war laid upon us for the destruction of our woodlands. Our Windsor Forest has suffered with the rest of the country. The regions of Ascot, Virginia Water and Sunningdale have paid heavy toll to Canadian lumbermen. We have made great sacrifices during the war, and amongst these must be counted the serene beauty of many an English landscape, and the loss of stately trees which none now living will ever see replaced.

But it is time to start again along our road. From Wickham Bushes we traverse its course to a spot close to Broadmoor Asylum, where criminal lunatics are detained "during

His Majesty's pleasure," and thence to Crowthorne village, which owes its origin to the great public school, Wellington College, founded in memory of the Great Duke in 1856. Then there was there a solitary thorn-tree, whence the village derives its name; it is now almost a town with innumerable villas and residences. The old track is visible on the side of the hill leading into Crowthorne, and the road passes through Circle Hill by a cutting twenty feet deep. Then the remains of the Causeway appears, eight feet above the heather, or did so a few years ago; but the builders have been busy here, and foundations have been dug and the grit that the Romans laid down has been found very useful for mixing mortar. A little further we come to the golf links nigh the Ravenswood estate. There I have often seen the Roman milestone, which I hope the golfers have left undisturbed. Another, discovered near Finchampstead Church is now in the garden of that charming old house, Bannisters. The road crosses the Wokingham road, past a new lodge, aptly named Roman Lodge, to Heathpool, which was formed in Roman times by building an embankment across the course of a small stream to construct a convenient watering-place for travellers. It then mounts the hill known as Finchampstead Ridges, though avoiding its steepest slopes. Stop at the summit and admire the view. This is one of the most famous beauty spots in Berkshire, or indeed in southern England. You look over a vast plain bounded by distant hills. At your feet is a deep escarpment clad with pines and firs and heather-clad slopes. Below in the valley of the Blackwater and beyond it rise the Hartford Bridge Flats, along which ran the old coaching road from London to Southampton, much loved by motorists. To the south-east at a distance of about twenty miles and upwards we can see the conical hill of Crookesbury and Hind Head, and in the south-west a clump of trees on the hills above Kingsclere, "Coltington Clump," with Highclere and Inkpen Beacon still further to the west. In the valley lies

Eversley, the home of Charles Kingsley, which we shall visit presently. Very much the same glorious view I used to see daily from my home when I was curate of Sandhurst, and in my garden the late Mr. Cecil Lawson painted his famous picture, "The Minister's Garden," thereby achieving renown and fortune. The picture has found an enduring home in the Manchester Fine Art Gallery.

These Finchampstead Ridges benefit by a splendid road made by the late Mr. John Walter, proprietor of *The Times*, who has left an indelible mark upon this neighbourhood by his benefactions and his buildings; it finishes in a noble avenue, a mile in length, of Wellingtonia pines, fifty-five on each side, forming a grand approach to Wellington College. On these Ridges King Henry VII and his son, Prince Arthur, riding from Easthampstead, set out to meet Katherine of Aragon after her arrival in England to become the prince's bride. Instead of seeing the Infanta they met a party of Spanish cavaliers who had come to forbid the approach of the royal bridegroom and his sire to the presence of her who, in true Moorish fashion, was not to be looked upon by her betrothed till she stood at the altar, or until she was his wife. This did not please either the young man or the king, who contended that as the Infanta was now in his realm he could look at her if he liked. So the King rode on to Dogmersfield, then the property of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, where the princess was staying, and Prince Arthur was left to kick his heels on the Ridges on a bleak day in November. Eager to gaze on the countenance of his bride, he soon grew tired of waiting, rode after his sire, and arrived at Dogmersfield half an hour after the king. Spanish etiquette was abandoned. The Prince saw his bride and they plighted their troths in person.

But the road is waiting for us, and we strike it again at Finchampstead Church, which occupies a commanding position on a hill, where once stood a rectangular camp of Roman



Near Sandhurst.



date, formed doubtless to defend the road. Much of it has disappeared, but the remains of the vallum can still be traced. The road passed just to the north of the camp and a loop road ran up to the camp, rejoining the main one on the other side, being cut deeply out of the side of the hill, so as to enable troops to descend under cover in either direction. A new manor house crowns the hill, and a few years ago the former Headmaster of Eton, Dr. Warre, then the tenant, discovered by the side of the road what he thought might be a large



Finchampstead.

Roman oven. He invited me to inspect this "find," but I was obliged to come to the conclusion that it was the oven of the old Tudor manor house, and not Roman, especially as I knew that the Romans were in the habit of using portable ovens.

The church is interesting with its Norman apse and fine brick tower, which contains a ring of most melodious bells, of which the tenor proclaims :

Thy praise and glory, Lord, we will resound
 To all the listening nations round,
 And with our tongues and voices raise
 To Thee, O God, our songs of praise.

1792. Thomas Allen and John Soane, Church-wardens.

Here are a Norman font and Norman pillar-piscina of much interest. The latter, with its credence, Mr. John Oldrid Scott pronounced to be unique. Parts of the pulpit seem to have belonged to a chancel screen ; there is a fine fifteenth century roof, and some of the windows belong to the Decorated period. Quite recently some Norman openings have been found in the north wall of the nave. The following inscription on a brass is worth noting :—

Here lyeth buried Henry Hynde Gent, Lorde of the Manor of Finchamsted Easte Courte, Purveyor to Kynge Henry the Eight, King Edward ye sixt, Queen Mary, King Philippe & Queene Elizabeth, of their Stables, who for his true zeale in Religion his faythevll Servis to his Prince & Country, & his harty Love to his neighboures was a perfecte Merror for his ensuinge Posteritie to imitate, who departed this life XXVIIIth Daye of December, 1580.

Well done, Master Hynde ! It must have been difficult for him to show " true zeale in Religion " under such divers masters, unless he followed the example of the Vicar of Bray, and resembled his chief the Lord Treasurer, the Marquis of Winchester, who held office for a similar length of time under the same sovereigns, and who attributed his ability in having done so to his possessing more of the characteristics of the willow than of the oak.

Proceeding along the road we find it marked on the left hand side of the lane leading from the " White Horse Inn " to the Nine Mile Ride. It then takes to the fields, but can be detected in dry summer by the thinness of the corn that grows upon its course. The Roman milestone, already mentioned, now in the garden of Bannisters, was taken from Six Acres Field hard-by. Actually on the road is the interesting house of West Court, long the home of the St. John family, and

possessing some fine carved mantelpieces, and its long drive is the actual road itself, which then proceeds to Little Ford, where the Blackwater and Whitewater rivers unite, through Riseley village. Though it has to pass through fields where all traces have vanished, we can conjecture its course by the names Coldharbour Wood, Stamford End, where there was a ford over the Loddon, Stratfield Saye, Stratfield Turgis, and Stratfield Mortimer, the prefix *strat* signifying street or paved way. The road skirted the north of Stratfield Saye Park, which was granted to the great Duke of Wellington by a grateful nation, and is still held by his descendants, and runs along Park Lane until at length it reaches the west gate of the old Roman town of Silchester.

There let us rest. Silchester is in Hampshire, and therefore beyond our border. Learned antiquaries have recorded the results of sixteen years' careful excavation of its site, its houses, baths, temples, forum, basilica and much else, the spoils of which have found a home in the Reading Museum. Nothing is to be seen now above ground except the old Roman wall and the amphitheatre with its grass-grown slopes, where once gladiators may have fought, wild beasts contended, and other sports been provided for the amusement of the populace.

We must hie back across the Berkshire border to our forest and trust that Titania with her attendant fairies, Peas-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed, will extend her courtesy to us wayfarers and bid them "Be kind and courteous to this gentleman." Naturally they would conduct the wayfarer to the Fairies' Glen which is situate in the Little Park nigh the spot where Herne's oak stood; but fairies are not chronologically inclined, and I prefer to go to Old Windsor which made Berkshire a Royal County long before New Windsor and its lordly castle looked down upon the Vale of Thames. There stood the palace or hunting-lodge of the Saxon kings, and Major Vaughan-Williams thinks that he has quite recently discovered its site. It lay hidden in

the depths of ancient woods, away from any public road and bridge. The king's highway ran north, the Devil's Causeway to the south. The nearest ford was three miles up the river. A bridle-path through the ferns and underwoods led to this Saxon lodge. Old oaks and elms grew round about it. Deep glades, with here and there a bubbling spring, extended league on league, as far as Chertsey Bridge and Guildford Down. This forest knew no tenants save the hart and boar, the chough and crow. Poetry and romance hung about this ancient forest lodge. Even the mythical king, Arthur of the Round Table, Arthur of the Blameless Life, is imagined to have been its builder. Froissart, who lived at the Court of Edward III, records that he assembled his knights at Windsor, and such may have been the traditional belief of his day. But Lambarde in his *Topographical Dictionary* has some quaint and discreet words on the subject. He wrote that it was a disputable question whether there were ever such a king or no, and that the only authority for the story was "Frozard," and he was but a foreign writer, and therefore not to be depended upon.

There Earl Godwin, sitting at the king's board, suspected of his brother Alfred's murder, died with the lie in his wicked throat: "So may I safely swallow this morsel of bread that I hold in my hand as I am guiltless of the deed," he said, and forthwith was choked. There Edward the Confessor lisped his prayers and cured the blind woodcutter Walwin, who exclaimed with rapture, "I see you, O King!" There too the Saxon princes, Tosti and Harold, had an unseemly quarrel. Earl Tosti seized his brother by the hair when about to pledge the king in a cup of wine, but Harold caught him in his arms and dashed him violently against the ground till they were parted by the soldiers. The stark Conqueror lived there too, and hunted and watched his men rearing their palisades and wooden stronghold on the chalk hill where now the lordly castle of Windsor stands.

The Romance of the Fitz-Warines¹ is located in our forest and is full of interest. The hero, Fulke Fitz-Warine, and his younger brothers were brought up with the children of Henry II. During the reign of King Richard he prospered greatly, was warden of the marches and had great estates. He was one of the bravest knights and strongest men of his age, and a very popular hero. Unfortunately he had a disastrous game of chess with Prince John, afterwards king. Being the better player he defeated the young prince, who at once displayed his evil nature by striking him on the head with the chess-board. Fulke retaliated and hit John so hard that he fell senseless. On his recovery John ran to tell his royal sire, who, knowing the lad's character, scolded him and ordered his tutor to beat him again for telling tales and complaining. John never forgave Fulke, and when he became king deprived him of his office and estates, and Fulke became an outlaw, wandering into many lands and seeking adventures by flood and field. Returning home he heard that John was at Windsor, whither he wended his way, hiding by day and travelling by night, until he and his companions came to the forest. He knew every part of it, and found a secure retreat. Presently they heard the huntsmen's horn and knew that the king was engaged in hunting. Fulke and his companions armed themselves, and he vowed to revenge himself on the king for his outlawry and disinheritance, and for all the wrongs he had suffered. Alone he went to meet his enemy. He met an old charcoal-burner dressed in black, and for a consideration obtained his clothes and triblet. The charcoal-burner went his way, and Fulke put on the garments and began to stir the fire. Presently the king and his three

¹It was originally composed in Anglo-Norman verse and in the thirteenth century it was translated into English verse. In the fourteenth century a prose version was made, and this alone survives, though Leland saw the earlier poems. This last version is in the British Museum and was translated and edited by T. Wright and printed by the Warton Society.

knights came along on foot, and the disguised Fulke knelt before the king who laughed at his courtly manners. He pretended that he knew where there was a stag, led the king and his knights to his secret hiding place where his companions were, who rushed forth, attacked and conquered the royal party, and threatened to kill John. However, John vowed to restore him to his office and lands and was allowed to escape. Needless to say the faithless king did not keep his vow, and ordered his lords to arm and capture the felons in the park. There was a little difference between a Norman and English knight, Sir James of Normandy asserting that all the English knights were cousins of Fulke-Warine, and therefore traitors to the king, and would not try to take the felons. Randolph, Earl of Chester, told the Norman that he lied and threatened to strike him with his fist. Space forbids to record all the numerous adventures that followed, how Fulke defeated the royal party and fled across seas, returned again, again captured the king, who under fear of death pledged his oath to pardon the outlaws, and, strange to say, kept his word. So Fitz-Warine regained his lands, enjoyed the royal favour, but in the end joined the party of the barons, and helped to force the king to sign Magna Carta on the field of Runnymede, well in sight of Windsor. So all ends happily as a good romance should.

Chaucer's "Romaunt of the Rose," a partial translation of a French poem of the thirteenth century, the "Roman de la Rose," contains an allusion to Windsor, and you will doubtless remember the verse.

By her danced a bachelere,
 I cannot tellen what he hight,
 But faire he was, and of good height ;
 All had he ben, I say no more,
 The lordes sonne of Windesore.

The metrical tale of "King Edward and the Shepherd" abounds in descriptions of the forest, and of the evil doings

of keepers and bailiffs, and of the habits and manners of the time of the third Edward. It is a long poem, of which I can only give a short epitome. The curious will find the manuscript in the Cambridge University Library, and it has been published by Mr. Hartshorne in his *Ancient Metrical Tales*.

The king is wandering by the riverside one bright May morning engaged in hawking, and meets a shepherd "who loved his hat so well" that he did not doff it, but merely says, "Sir, gudday." They become friendly, and then he tells his miseries :

I am so pyled with the king,
That I must flee from my wonyng,
And therefore wooe is me.
I had cattell, now I have none.
They take my bestis, and don them slone,
And payon but a stick of tree,
They take my hennes and my geese
And my sheep with all the fleese
And led them all away.

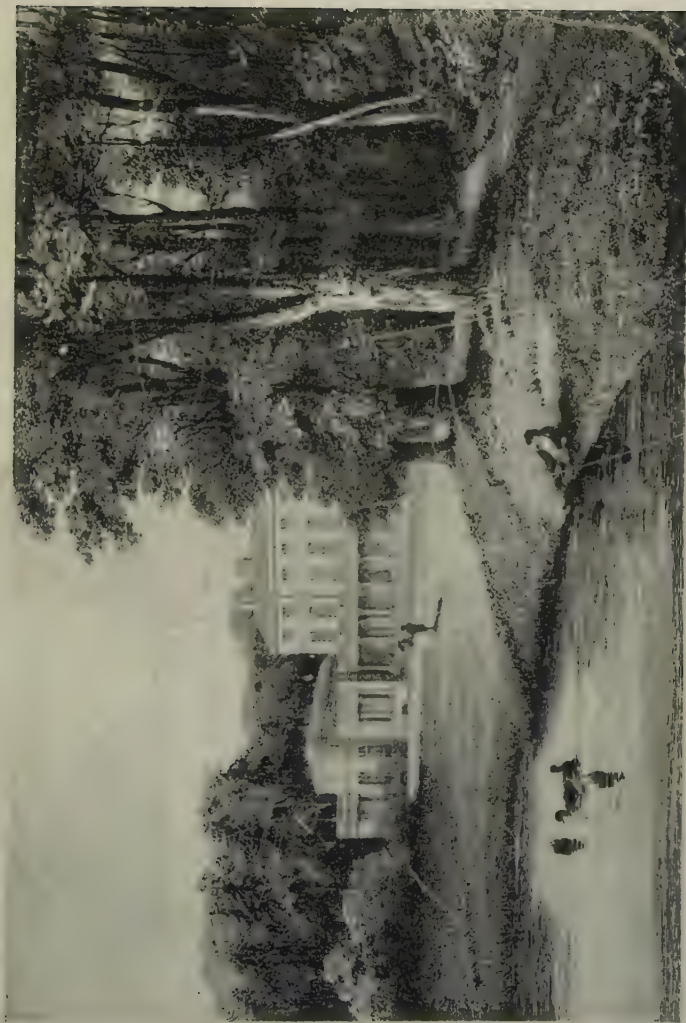
He tells of other wrongs he had endured at the hands of the king's men, the bailiffs and keepers, and the king asks him his name. "Adam the Shepherd," he replied, and the king tells him that men call him "Joly Robin," and assures him that the king is quite ignorant of his wrongs. Adam insists that the king owes him by the stick of hazel (the usual method of reckoning) £4 "odd two shillings," and promises Robin seven shillings if he would get it for him. Jolly Robin tells him that the other Edward loved him well, that he had a son with the queen, and that if the shepherd came to the court on the morrow he would receive his money. Their friendship grows. Adam invites Jolly Robin to dinner, and tells him that he is wonderfully skilful with his sling, and can hit any wild fowl that flies. So they walk to where

The shepherd's house full merry stood
Under a forest fair and good.

They see much game, and Jolly Robin says that he would take some, but Adam advises him to be silent as "Wood has ears and field has sight"; the forester might hear his words and he had archers serving under him to keep the deer for the king, who had built a lodge for them. This doubtless refers to the hunting lodge on St. Leonard's Hill, where the house of the late Sir Francis Tress Barry now stands, looks down upon the vale and has a grand view of the Castle. At the shepherd's cottage a great meal is spread, consisting of wheaten bread, "ii penny ale," heron, curlews, wild swan and other fowls, victims to the shepherd's sling. They play a jovial rustic game of alternate drafts of ale; the shepherd becomes more confidential, tells Jolly Robin that he could slay a buck or doe with his sling, shows him a secret chamber full of venison and wine, and displays his skill in killing deer with a sling and stone.

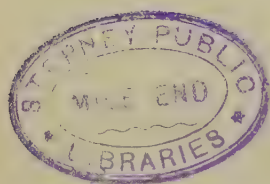
The ballad was never finished, but Adam goes to court, finds Jolly Robin, gets his money, discovers that he has been feasting with the king and is overcome with fear and sorrow. However, we may conclude that all ended happily and that Adam the Shepherd had a full fling with his sling and was a privileged poacher in the forest for the rest of his life.

There is a large amount of sly wit and shrewdness in this simple tale. It was levelled at the extortions of the king's bailiffs and their servants. As the late Mr. Hughes says in his account of the traditions of Windsor: "Whoever wrote it must have known the forest intimately, and the ways and very language and manner of the rudest foresters. With one as wary as a wild stag, how natural the caution—'wood has ears, field has sight.' There are dwellers in the forest now with all Adam's cunning of hand, although not so practised, and with all his sly discretion; no beast of the field, from the weasel upwards, but they can capture, or wild bird they cannot take, 'an they will'; they may probably be able neither to write nor read, but can fell a tree with wonderfully few strokes, and



Frogmore.

To face page 18.]



have rare skill in all their rustic crafts." Mr. Hughes conjectures that the ballad might have been written by Chaucer. None knew the forest better than he, for he lived some years at Windsor; none could better supply the worldly wisdom and sly sarcasm of the ballad. And the style is his, as well as the very expressions in many instances, nor would the date be inconsistent with such a theory.

But the fairies have been waiting long to conduct us to the spot where Herne's Oak once stood, and we recall what Shakespeare tells in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Mrs. Page says:

There is an old tale goes, that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
Doth all the winter time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner;
You have heard of such a spirit; and well you know,
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Received, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Her husband continues:

Why, yet there want not many that do fear
In deep c^o night to walk by this Herne's oak;
But what of this?

Mrs. Ford. Marry, this is our desire.

That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.

Much learning has been bestowed upon this Herne. Some say his name was Horne, as it stands in the first sketch of Shakespeare's play, and Mr. Halliwell discovered in a manuscript in the British Museum the name of "Richard Horne, yeoman," amongst those hunters "which he examyned and have confessed for hunting in the forest." The oak stood in the Little Park on the right of the footpath which until the middle of the last century led from Windsor to Datchet.

In Collier's map of the Little Park (1742) it is called "Sir John Falstaff's Oak." Near it was the dell, or pit, wherein Shakespeare intended to place Anne Page as the fairy queen, Sir Hugh Evans like a satyr, and the rest of the troop. Alas ! the dell was filled up when the footpath to Datchet was diverted ; the old tree lingered until 1796 when it was cut down with other dead trees by order of George III on the advice of his bailiff.

It is not necessary here to discuss at length the origin of the legend, whether there ever was a Herne or Horne, whether he really was supposed to haunt the tree on which he hanged himself, or whether

Women to affright their little children
Say that he walks in shape of a great stag.

Shakespeare loved the woods and forests, and knew well that of Arden, but it is doubtful whether he knew Windsor. In Norden's map of the forest there is a Herne or Heron's Wood. Possibly he scanned that map and took the name for the imaginary tree that he immortalized, and wove around its branches this quaint legend. Thousands have visited the spot and even looked upon a tree that did duty for Herne's Oak long after the original was destroyed, and in so doing paid tribute to the imagination and genius of the poet rather than to the shade of the hunter.





Windsor, from the Home Park.

Forest Hunting

TO know the forest you must study Norden's map, wherein are set out all its roads, highways and byways, towns, villages, bailiwicks, walks, and the kinds of deer preserved therein. When the king, whose flatterers called him "the Solomon of the North," but who was really very stupid, boorish, unpleasant, caring for little but his hunting, came to the English throne, he set John Norden to work to survey his Honor of Windsor with special reference to his sport. Norden performed his task well, and the result is an admirable map and description which are full of interest. The forest was divided into sixteen "walkes," each of which was stocked with red or fallow deer and placed in the charge of a keeper, who was an important official, a gentleman of the court, or one who claimed the office by right of inheritance. The following is the list of these "walkes":

- Egham Walke, of which Cresswell was the keeper.
- Cranborne Walke—keeper, Sir Richard Lovelace.
- New Lodge Walke—Mr. Stafordton, keeper.
- Swinley Walke—Sir Henry Neville, keeper.
- Windlesham Walke—Mr. Walters, keeper.
- Chertsey Walke—Sir Richard Weston, keeper.
- Brookwoode Walk—Mr. Twitcher, keeper.
- Purbrighte Walke—Mr. Hobson, keeper.
- Linchford et Ashe Walkes—Sir Richard Weston, keeper.
- Frimley Walke—Mr. Taylor, keeper.

Easthampstead Walke—Sir Richard Comsoye, keeper.

Sandhurst Walke—Sir Charles Howard, keeper.

Bigshot Walke—Sir Charles Howard, keeper.

Bearewood Walke—Sir Francis Knowles, keeper.

Warfield Walke—the private property of Sir Henry Neville.

Binfield Walke, otherwise “Fines Bayliwick,” including a large district extending northwards from Wokingham to the Thames, of which Sir Henry Neville claimed to be the keeper by inheritance, under an original grant by patent.

Three of these walks, New Lodge, Cranborne and Beareswood, contained fallow deer; the remainder were stocked with red deer, except Binfield Walk, which contained both kinds. The boundaries of the walks were ill defined; hence there was much contention between the keepers for usurpation and intruding on each other's walks; and heated controverſie, arose. Within several of these walks were parks or rayles, being grounds enclosed with paling and stocked with deer. Besides this forest region there were the Little and Great Parks. In the former there were 240 fallow deer; and the latter was divided into four walks, each of which had a lodge. It contained 1,800 deer. In Haybourne's walk was a lodge that stood on the site of the present Cumberland Lodge, so named after the Duke of Cumberland, surnamed “the butcher” on account of his “frightfulness” inflicted on the Highlanders after the Battle of Culloden. Here the late Prince Christian, Ranger of Windsor Forest, lived for many years and won the hearts of all Berkshire folk.

The annals of our forest hunting date back to very early times, long before Norden made his map for the sapient James, and thereby earned £200. No forest with the exception, perhaps, of Fontainebleau, has ever been so famous for its sport or so illustrious in its sportsmen. I do not propose to record all its story, as we have to wander into other fields and pastures, and this forest might fill all my chapters. I can only name, therefore, such mighty hunters as William Twici,

the king's huntsman, who wrote a treatise on his craft in Norman-French, or William de Foxhunte, who flourished at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, the De Brocases, Richard de Bataille, Oliver de Bordeaux. These were some of the chief foresters in early days. The Mastership of the Royal Buckhounds was hereditary, until in more recent times it became a political appointment, and changed with the Ministry. A story is told of Lord Bateman, Master, who asked George III at what hour the hounds should be turned out, and received the reply, "I cannot exactly tell, but I can inform you that your lordship was turned out an hour ago."

Methods of hunting have changed through the ages. When the Royal Buckhounds ceased to exist the carted deer continued in vogue, until the Great War began, with the Berks and Bucks Farmers' Staghounds. At an earlier period the stag was roused from his lair with blood hounds, or harboured by the huntsman or yeoman pricklers on foot, and these fleet dogs of the greyhound type were slipped from their leash for the chase. In Queen Elizabeth's time another method was practised. In Norden's map of the Little Park there is a building called the "Standinge," which seems to have been designed for spectators to watch the pursuit and capture of the stag, and sometimes deer were driven past it and shot with arrows by privileged persons ensconced therein. Queen Bess often indulged in this not very sportsmanlike proceeding.

But while they lived the deer were the lords of the forest. Everything was done for their convenience and preservation. Some man who set up a windmill was compelled to take it down lest it should frighten the deer. Hedges were not to be so high but that they could jump over them. But in spite of forest laws there have always been poachers, who as time went on increased their depredations. In the thirteenth century there was a noted outlaw, who earned the reputation of the "Robin Hood" of our forest, Gurden by name. He

with his band of daring followers, killed the deer, ravaged Berkshire and its adjacent counties, and did as they pleased. He was said to have been the strongest man of his age. He had a trial of strength with the gallant Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I, and the prince won, and was so pleased with his adversary's valour that he made him Keeper of the Forest, and gave him Temple Manor at Selborne, where he lived happily ever afterwards with his good wife Constantia, and gave good gifts to the parish that sheltered him. The story goes that Prince Edward took him to Guildford Castle and introduced him to his bride, Eleanor of Castile, and that he and she entreated the king to pardon him.

Prince Edward hath brought him to Guildford Tower,
Ere that summer's day is o'er,
He hath led him into the secret bower
Of his wife, fair Eleonore.
His mother, the lady of gay Provence,
And his sire, the king, was there :
Oh, scarcely the Gurdon dare advance
In a presence so stately and fair.

Lady Russell quoting this ballad states that from his son the present Gurdon of Letton is descended.

James of Scotland had great trouble with poachers. By closing the royal parks he roused the wrath of the people, who retaliated, tore down the king's fences, carried off the lops and tops of his trees and slew his rabbits. There was bad blood between the town and Castle. Puritan ideas were increasing which liked not sport and revels and balls and masques. The mayor and burgesses and magistrates took the side of the people and roused the wrath of the king. A curious scene took place in the forest in Moat Park, where James was engaged in coursing. The mayor, two aldermen and a country magistrate dared to intrude upon his sport with a request that he would attach a canonry in his chapel of St. George to the Vicarage of Windsor. The king was en-

raged, curtly refused their petition, and then turning on the mayor, he stormed :

" Am I an ill neighbour to you ? Do I do you any hurt ? Why then do you vex me by permitting and suffering your poor to cut down and carry away my wood out of my parks and grounds and to sell the same ? "

The mayor and magistrates excused themselves ; poor people were so hard to keep in check. What could they do ?

Do ? They could whip the rogues, and punish those who had bought their lops and tops. " Go," the king growled ; " go, whip them all ; not only those who steal, but those who buy. Hence ! Whip them all ! "

So ended the interview, but the matter did not end. Farmers and respectable burghers of Windsor took to killing the king's deer, hunting by night with their own hounds, riding their own horses. Some were tried, but no jury would convict. So James sowed the seed, and the harvest was reaped by his son and his son's sons.

There is no space for me to record all the lawless deeds done in our forest, the troubles of the Civil War, the slaughter of the deer, the gipsies and other wild people that dwelt in the woods and caught the poor stags with baited apples, the highwaymen who haunted our roads, the " Wokingham Blacks," to whose exploits I may again refer, and finally the enclosure of the forest lands and the vast changes wrought thereby which were by no means all good and beneficial.

Before we leave the actual forest and its story I must point out sundry bypaths and byways that intersect our district. They radiate like the spokes of a wheel from the Castle as the centre. There is one long road called the Nine Mile Ride, literally nine weary miles in length through the pine woods. These roads owe their origin in the first instance to Queen Anne, called " the Good." She had a passion for hunting, and, as Dean Swift records in his letter to Stella, she used to hunt the stag in summer through the meridian heat, and drove

forty miles in one day. When she came to the throne she could no longer mount into the saddle and used to ride in an open "calash" in the forest down the long drives which she had made. Dean Swift mentions that she hunted in a chaise with one horse, driving herself, and "she drives furiously like Jehu, and is a mighty hunter like Nimrod."

Nine of these drives which form a feature of our forest radiate from the Soldiers' Pillar at Ascot, and others from different points of the surrounding heathlands. Many of them were completed by George III who in his later years could not ride a horse. I believe the Nine Mile Ride was made by him and ends lamely close to a brick-kiln. Malicious tongues often wag about royalties, and it has been said that he had this ride constructed in order to visit the fair Quakeress Hannah Lightfoot; but there is, I believe, no ground for this legendary scandal.

An old-time hunting scene shall close this description of our forest. Mr. William Chafin, clerk, is the chronicler; he added some anecdotes of our forest to his stories of Cranbourn Chase. In the summer of 1741 he resided with his grandfather, Sir Anthony Sturt, at Heckfield, and there he saw the scene.

"In the month of June it so happened that a stag had strayed away or been driven from Windsor Forest, and had taken up its abode in Heckfield Woods, and on a certain fixed day the whole Royal Hunt from Windsor assembled on Heckfield Heath in pursuit of the deer which had been harboured and ready for them. A grander sight of the kind could not possibly be exhibited, and much beyond my power to describe. A considerable part of the Royal Family were present; his Royal Highness William, Duke of Cumberland, and his sister Amelia, one of the best and most amiable princesses that ever lived. . . . The huntsmen, yeoman prickers, and other attendants, all in the same uniform dresses, were in waiting on the Common with two packs of hounds, one of them as a relay to intercept the stag in case he should take a different course toward the forest from what was expected. The Princess Amelia, attended by Lady Charlotte Finch and many others of her gentlewomen, were mounted on fine horses, and the ladies all dressed alike in scarlet habits, bespangled with red ribbons formed to resemble very small

roses ; their velvet caps were also adorned in the same manner. The nets, also, with which the ladies' horses were covered, were plentifully spangled over with the same little roses, as were the dresses of all the retinue, and all their accoutrements, even the reins and bits of the bridles were covered with red ribbons in the form of roses ; whether to celebrate any particular day I never heard, but it was long before the new style was introduced. As soon as His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland had joined the party and given some orders, the stag was roused and came out in view of the hounds over Heckfield Common, to the delight of the numerous spectators who were there assembled ; and took his course through Stratfield Say, the fine seat of Lord Rivers (now the Duke of Wellington's) ; from thence by Mr. Dod's of Swallowfield ; and was then run into and taken alive near the town of Reading ; the illustrious Princess Amelia, with several of her maids of honour, were in at the end of the chase ; and by her gracious intercession the deer's life was saved, and the next day he was conveyed to Windsor, his native place, and turned into one of the enclosed parks there, where I have no doubt but he lived and enjoyed himself many years in peace, plenty and quietness."

I may add that on this occasion the Duke of Cumberland "in taking a dangerous leap had a fall, owing to his horse slipping on a clay bank, but fortunately received no injury, but the soiling the scarlet uniform dress and the total destruction of the red roses." In view of his subsequent conduct and his treatment of the Highlanders after the Battle of Culloden, it would have been better if he had broken his neck.

With this brilliant account of old-time hunting let us leave the forest in general and visit some particular spots and villages in it which are worthy of special notice.

III

Binfield and Pope

AS we wander through the forest we find many place-names ending in *field*. These signify clearings made in the forest by the Anglo-Saxon settlers or a tract of open country. These names are full of interest, and perhaps we shall be able to study them more closely a little later. The old form of Binfield was Benetfeld, and *benet* or *beonet* means a kind of coarse grass. From this lowly origin sprang this delightful village with its well-wooded and well-watered pastures, nigh the old road that runs from Reading to Windsor and thence to London. Two hundred years ago, and that was perhaps the period of its greatest fame, it was an attractive place, and since then many large houses have sprung into being, so much so that a former rector, who was somewhat partial to dining out, remarked that he had in his parish thirty-two "soup and fish houses." Old families have died out and new ones have come, and Binfield is no very undesirable place wherein to live and end one's days.

Coming to it from Windsor through Bracknell you turn to the right at the four cross-roads after passing the "Stag and Hounds Inn," you descend a steep hill having on the right the charmingly-situated manor house. On the left is an inn called the "Jack of Newbury," recalling the memory of the grand old clothier of that town who lived in the time of Henry VIII, became rich and prosperous, and sent a company of



Pope's House, Binfield.



Newbury archers to fight at Flodden Field and earn a great renown. Does not the old ballad tell their fame? It runs :

Come Archers learne the News I telle
 To the Honoure of yōur Arte,
 The Scottysche Kinge at Flodden felle
 Bye the poynte of an Englyshe Darte.
 Thoughe Fyre and Pyke dyd Wond'rous thynges
 More wonders stylee dyd wee
 And ev'ry Tongue with rapture syngs
 Of the Laddes of Newberrie.

The Chesshyre Laddes were bryske and brave
 And the Kendall Laddes as free,
 But none surpass'd, or I'm a knave,
 The Laddes of Newberrie.

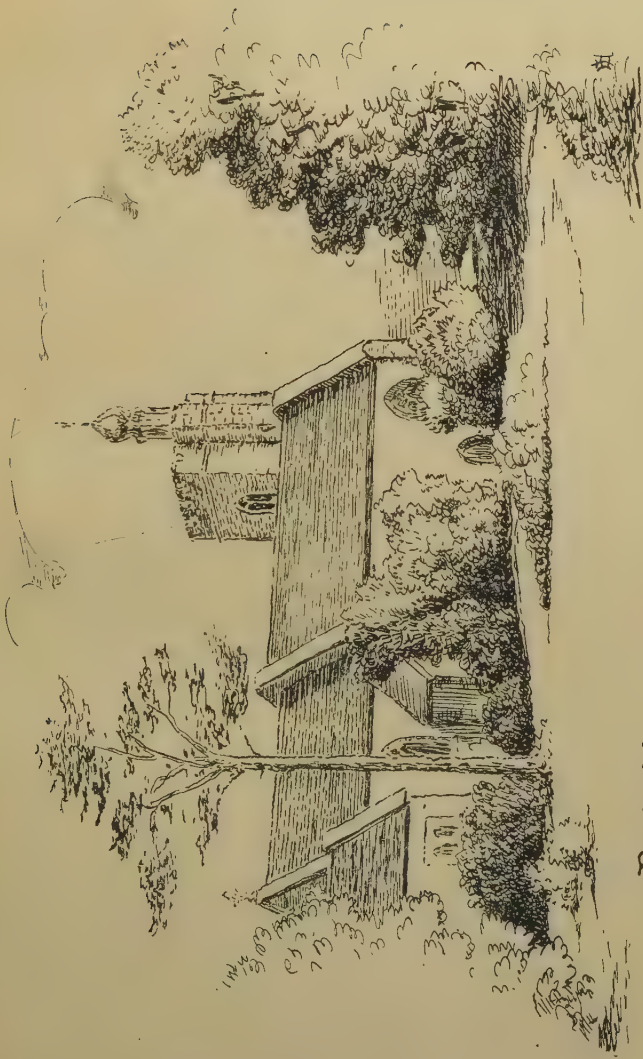
Just a little further is the church embowered in trees and nestling against the slope of a steepish hill. Although the hand of the restorer has been laid somewhat heavily on the sacred building it retains much of great interest. We have no good building-stone in our district. For the erection of village churches in the days when transit was difficult our ancestors did not import Caen stone from Normandy, or even Purbeck marble, but contented themselves in this neighbourhood with the conglomerate "pudding stone" which they collected with infinite pains and labour when they broke up the "iron pan" of the surrounding heath country. The old squat tower of Binfield church is built of this. You enter the church through a large fifteenth century open-timbered porch constructed of carved oak, black with age and of fine workmanship. In the interior we notice a black letter copy of Erasmus's Paraphrase of the Four Gospels, of which every church by the order of Edward VI in 1547 was bound to provide a copy for the better instruction of the people in the Word of God. There is a fine Jacobean pulpit dated "Ano. Dom. 1628," and an elaborate hour-glass stand of hammered ironwork, consisting of oak leaves and acorns, vine leaves and bunches of grapes, with three coats-of-arms of the Smiths'

and Farriers' Company of London. This pulpit must have been a fine work of art in the days of its prime. It has, however, lost its pedestal, staircase and sounding-board, the latter having been removed to the vestry.

The present church dates from about 1360, but the old Norman font, which is tub-shaped with a modern base, is a relic of a much earlier building. On the floor of the sacarium is a small brass, a half-length figure of a priest, represented with a stunted beard, and the apparels of the amice and alb are ornamented with quatrefoils. Underneath is the inscription in Norman French :

**Water de Annesfordhe gist icy
dieu de sa aime eit mercy.**

It is one of the oldest brasses in the kingdom, for the said "Water" was rector of Binfield in 1361. Ashmole in his *Antiquities of Berks* in 1664-6 recorded the existence of seven brasses, but with the exception of this one, owing to the carelessness of the restorers, all the rest had until a few years ago disappeared. The late rector, Canon Savory, sent me one day some pieces of an inscribed brass which he had found in a cupboard in the rectory. I at once saw that this was a mutilated long-lost memorial. I consulted Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., the greatest authority in England on the subject, and the result was the restoration of the brass to the church. It was discovered to be an interesting palimpsest. After the period of the Reformation the brass-makers' shops were filled with old material, spoil from the destruction of the great monastic churches and from the suppression of chantry chapels; these pieces were worked up again into new memorials inscribed upon the reverse side. There are examples of these palimpsest brasses in several other Berkshire churches, Blewbury, Cookham, where a part of a Flemish brass has been re-used, Denchworth and St. Laurence's Church, Reading. The two latter were spoil from monastic houses, one from



Binfield

Bisham Priory, the other from the Charterhouse, London. This brass at Binfield, now happily restored and fitted with a hinge so that you can see both sides of it, records the memory of Richard Turner and Katherine, his wife, the former having died on the 26th day of October, 1558, and the latter on April 13th, 1539, "whose soules Jhu pardon." On the reverse is the greater part of the lower figure of an abbot in full vestments, embroidered sandals, alb, orphrey, stole, dalmatic with its fringed edge, tunic, chasuble, maniple, embroidered glove and a book enclosed in a bag. Its date is about 1400. Another fragment on the reverse is the memorial of William Bampton, citizen and stock fishmonger of London, which Mr. Stephenson assigns to the second half of the fifteenth century. Vandalism was rampant in the sixteenth century, and it is pleasant to reflect that antiquaries in the twentieth century are able to do something to remedy the evil deeds then perpetrated.

The advowson of this church in early times belonged to the Abbey of Cirencester, and Thomas de Thorp was the first rector whose name has survived, the list dating back to 1317. Amongst these was John Truman, against whom a quaint and violently worded presentment was made in the Bishop's Court, Lamplough, afterwards Archbishop of York, and Wilson, travelling tutor to William Pitt. Immediately in front of the altar are six black marble gravestones, each with a coat-of-arms elaborately sculptured at the head. One is to the memory of Henry, fifth and last Earl of Stirling, and other monuments in the church record the deaths of members of the Leigh family, Lady Sunderland, whose portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mrs. Macaulay Graham, the "blue-stockings" satirized by Dr. Johnson. It is noticeable that these five tombstones are in memory of Roman Catholics who lived in the reign of Charles II. One has the letters C.A.P.D., a disguised form of the favourite pre-Reformation prayer *Cujus Anima Propicietur Deus*. Evidently there

was a colony of Roman Catholics at Binfield at the end of the seventeenth century, and amongst these were members of the Dancastle family. The last of the race died in 1780, "after patiently enduring the most excruciating pains of the gout without intermission for upwards of sixteen years," as a tablet to his memory in the church records. It was owing to two brothers, John and Thomas, scions of this house, that Alexander Pope, the father of the poet, came to reside in the village, which thus became the home of the famous writer during his early years.

Alexander the elder and John Dancastle had similar tastes, both being devoted to gardening, and a warm friendship existed between them. This elder Pope was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, who placed him with a merchant at Lisbon, where he became a convert to the Church of Rome. On his return to England he was unsuccessful in business affairs, and Hearne, our Berkshire antiquary, speaks of him as "a poor ignorant man, a tanner," "a sort of broken merchant who was said to be a mechanic, a hatter, a farmer, nay a bankrupt." These are probably libels called forth by his son's bitter satire; and it is fairly certain that the father was a linen draper in London, and that he bought a small estate at Binfield and settled there in 1700. Pope described his home as:

My paternal cell
A little house with trees a-row,
And like its master very low.

He tells how his father spent the time in gardening, and how he

Plants cauliflowers and boasts to rear
The earliest mellons of the year.

The present house is very large and contains little of the elder home; a small room in it tradition calls the poet's study. It formerly bore the name of Pope's Wood, but is now known as Arthurstone. It was the poet's home from the age of twelve.

He was a delicate, lonely, precocious child. His half-sister married and left the house. A Roman priest was engaged to instruct him for a short time, as three others had done in London. "This was all the teaching I ever had, and God knows, it extended a very little way," he mournfully stated. He was, however, fond of reading, and studied, as he listed, English, Italian and Latin literature, wandered in the forest, imbibed its spirit and revelled in its beauties. He owed much to the inspiration of our Windsor Forest. Especially did he love to sit and compose verses beneath the shade of some noble beech trees near his home. Here an admirer in later days carved the words upon one of them, "HERE POPE SANG."¹ When this tree was blown down a neighbouring tree was similarly inscribed in what is still called Pope's Wood. Some years ago I showed an engraving of this to the owner of Arthurstone, who called the attention of the late Mr. Hutchinson Browne, of Moor Close, in whose grounds Pope's Wood stands, to it; and he at once caused the words to be again cut on one of the trees, and the late Rev. C. W. Penny obtained from his friend the Rev. Charles Stanwell, Vicar of Ipsden, the following verses in Latin and English which were inscribed upon a brass plate and affixed to the tree:

Angliacis resonare modis qui suasit Homerum
 Hic cecinit laudes, Vindelisora, tuas;
 Huic Silvæ nomen vates dedit; arboris olim
 Inciso testis cortice truncus evat.
 Silva diu periit, sed nomen et umbra supersunt.
 Umbra viri circum, nomen ubique volat.

He to our Lyre who wooed great Homer's strain,
 Here sang the praise of Windsor's sylvan reign;
 Hence gained the wood a poet's name; of old
 The attesting trunk, inscribed, the story told.
 The wood hath perished, but surviving still
 His shade these haunts, his name the world doth fill.

¹ Authorities differ as to the identity of this admirer and it seems to rest between Lady Gower of Bill Hill and Lord Lyttleton.

Here, then, and in his home, the poet wrote his many juvenile poems, some of which he saw fit to destroy. But his severe studies and lack of companionship told their tale and undermined his health. He thought he was going to die, but the Abbé Southcote, a devoted friend living near Abingdon, on his behalf consulted the famous Dr. Radcliffe of Oxford, who prescribed for him strict diet, less study and a daily ride in the open air.

One day during his ride he met a famous neighbour, the squire of Easthampstead, Sir William Trumbull, of Easthampstead Park. This was in olden days a royal hunting lodge wherein many of our monarchs have stayed to kill the deer. Here, too, the unhappy Queen Katherine resided when her divorce with her tyrannical spouse, Henry VIII, was pending. The old house was pulled down some years ago and the large modern mansion built as the seat of the Marquis of Downshire. It contains a great store of historical manuscripts which are being reported on by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and a noble collection of books and pictures. Many of these owe their preservation and collection to that charming old man who befriended Pope in his youth and to whom he owed nearly everything save his genius. He was a great statesman and had lived abroad as ambassador, first at Paris and then at Constantinople. He was Secretary of State to William III, and then weary of court life he retired "to enjoy the glory of being great no more."

Pope in a letter to his friend Wycherly, described the society in our forest neighbourhood :

"Ours are a sort of inoffensive people, who neither have sense nor pretend to any, but enjoy a jovial kind of dullness. They are commonly known in the world by the name of honest, civil gentlemen. They live much as they ride, at random—a kind of hunting life, pursuing with earnestness and hazard something not worth the catching; never in the way nor out of it. I cannot but prefer solitude to the company of all these."

And in another letter he wrote to a friend :

" I assure you I am looked upon in the neighbourhood for a very sober and well-disposed person, no great hunter indeed, but a great esteemer of that noble sport, and only unhappy in my want of constitution for that and drinking. They all say 'tis pity I am so sickly, and I think 'tis a pity they are so healthy ; but I say nothing that may destroy their good opinion of me."

This good opinion was doubtless greatly increased when the hunting squires discovered that they had a poet among them, whose early verses were being published in the *Spectator*, and in Tonson's *Miscellanies*. Then Pope began to publish by subscription some longer pieces, his *Pastorals*, modelled on Virgil's Eclogues and dedicated to his old friend Trumbull, his *Essay on Criticism*, (1711), *Windsor Forest* (1713) and *The Rape of the Lock* (1714). His *Essay on Criticism* carried the poet out of the region of our forest circle. It introduced him to the famous wits of the period, Steele, Addison, Gay and Swift. It caused the first of his many literary quarrels, his adversary being John Dennis, who had scoffed at his *Pastorals*, and who in the guise of Appius received this Roland for his Oliver :

'Twere well might critics still their freedom take,
But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares tremendous with a threatening eye
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.

Dennis then retorted in a pamphlet containing much personal abuse, after the fashion of the controversialists of those days, describing Pope as a " hunch-backed toad," and continuing :

" If you have a mind to inquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young, short, squat gentleman, an eternal writer of amorous pastoral madrigals and the very bow of the God of love, you will soon be directed to him. And pray, as soon as you have taken a survey of him, tell me whether he is a proper author to make personal reflections."

His *Windsor Forest* has been described as "a beautiful incongruity." He speaks of the

Inspiring shade,
Scene of my youthful loves and happy hours,

Yet he talks of the pines diffusing "a noxious shade," and of the "dreary desert," and the "gloomy waste," and finally

Crowns the forests with immortal greens.

This love of nature was inspired by Virgil; it was not real and true. It is doubtful whether he ever loved our forest, and this may be proved by his letter to his friend Parnell, wherein he says: "I can easily imagine the solitary hours of your eremitical life in the mountains from some parallel to it in my own retirement at Binfield; we are both miserably enough situated." Miserably enough situated! in our Forest! well may each lover of it cry "For shame!"

Pope tells in his *Windsor Forest* of his friendship with and admiration for the good knight who had befriended him, advised him and encouraged him in his endeavours and early struggles. I have no space to quote all his graceful verse, just tribute to his friend's noble qualities and charming character:

Happy [the man], who to these shades retires,
Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires;
Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
Successive study, exercise and ease.
He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields;

Or looks on heaven with more than mortal eyes.
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home!
Such was the life great Scipio once admired,
Thus Atticus and Trumbal thus retired.

The story of *The Rape of the Lock* would take long to tell.

It introduces us to one of Berkshire's most beautiful manor houses, Ufton Court, near Reading, and to a very beautiful lady, the belle of London Society, Arabella Fermor, who married Francis Perkins and lived in that charming old house, not far from the Bath road, from which you branch off three miles from Theale.

The story of the poem was suggested by the quarrel of the Fair one with Lord Petre who had dared to cut off and steal, unbeknown to the lady, a lock of her hair. Pope did not personally know her, and the poem was suggested by his friend John Caryll as a means for healing the quarrel. But it made Arabella still more furious and enraged her against the poet for presuming to publish the poem without her leave, and for appending a motto which was taken by her friends to imply that she had asked him to compose it. However, a second edition with a propitiatory letter of dedication to Arabella smoothed matters and the poet and the lady became friends. It was probably the most successful of all his works. Three thousand copies were sold in four days, but those were the days of Grub Street and poor pay for authors, and Pope only received £15 for his work.

The days of Pope's sojourn in the Forest were numbered. At the suggestion of Sir William he began to translate the *Iliad* into English verse, or rather, for he was too poor a Greek scholar to read Homer in the original, to versify other people's translations. I need not tell how successful this enterprise was, how it brought comparative wealth to the poet and his family, and how it necessitated them to leave Binfield and mitigate to Chiswick. His farewell to the Forest is recorded in a letter to Carlyle :

" I write this from Windsor Forest, which I am come to take my last look and leave of. We have bid our Papist neighbours adieu, much as those who go to be hanged do their fellow-prisoners who are condemned to follow them a few weeks after. I was at Whiteknights, where I

found the young ladies¹ I just now mentioned spoken of a little more coldly than I could at this time especially have wished. I parted from honest Mr. Dancastle with tenderness, and from Sir William Trumbell as from a venerable prophet, foretelling with lifted hands the miseries to come upon posterity which he was just going to be removed from."

Sir William died at the end of the year in which Pope left the village, leaving an only son eight years old. The boy's tutor was Elijah Fenton who had helped Pope with his *Homer*, and remained at Easthampstead as librarian, dying in 1730 "of indolence and inactivity" as Pope declares in one of his letters, though he did not write that on the elegant epitaph which he composed and which still appears on the north wall of Easthampstead.

¹ These were Theresa and Martha Blount, the daughters of the squire of Mapledurham. We shall see their fine old house as we journey up the Thames from Reading.

IV

Wokingham, a Forest Town

FROM Binfield one is tempted to wander to Warfield which possesses a church that is an architectural gem of no mean brilliancy. There are evidences of the thirteenth century church still remaining in the north wall, but its chief charm is the later work of the fourteenth century chancel and chancel-aisle, which are the more exquisite and original works of the Decorated period of which Berkshire can boast. The fine mouldings and beautiful cusping of the windows, the splendid sedilia in the south wall, the fifteenth century oak screen dividing the north aisle from the nave, of rare beauty and goodness of design and execution, with its ancient loft, are the chief striking features of the building. The rood loft stairs still give access to the loft, as they did in former days. In the chancel is a piscina with a curious niche below it, and there are two squints or hagioscopes through which the faithful could see the elevation of the host, when their direct vision was obstructed.

The church was restored with great care by Mr. George Edmund Street, who reproduced much old work of which traces remained; and this restoration was confined to the development and exhibition of all the ancient features. The nave arcade is well designed and well detailed fifteenth century work, and the roof are all old and good examples of simple honest carpentry. The old glass in the east window is worthy of notice, depicting a pair of censuring angels and small



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Scripture subjects very charmingly executed. The screen across the chancel at its eastern end encloses a space behind the altar which was probably used in olden days as a sacarium. A similar arrangement may be seen at Arundel church. This screen is a restoration, as are the niches and the chancel screen, but all are based on ancient fragments discovered during the restoration of the church. There are some good examples of Elizabethan or Jacobean monuments of the desk-kneeler type, husband and wife being represented facing each other and praying at a prayer desk. The low-side window, commonly called a "leper's window," invites discussion upon which I cannot enter now, save to notice that the popular idea is certainly erroneous. Warfield church is worthy of a visit, as one of the best Decorated churches in Berkshire.

Our faces are set towards the old Forest town of Wokingham, and here I may note the changed condition of the country. In former times it was wild and desolate, with long stretches of heath and few roads. Hence it was not difficult for travellers to lose their way at night time. So Richard Palmer, a good benefactor of Wokingham, in his Will dated April 12, 1664, bequeathed a rent-charge on a piece of land in the parish of Eversley for the purpose of paying the sexton to ring the greatest bell in the church for half-an-hour every evening at eight o'clock, and every morning at four o'clock, or as near those hours as might be, from the 10th of September to the 11th of March for ever. The object of this ringing was to encourage a timely going to rest in the evening and an early rising in the morning, and to be a timely and pious reminder of the hearers' latter end, inclining them to think of their own passing bell and day of death, while the morning bell reminded them of their resurrection and call to their last judgment, but also in order that strangers and others, who should happen in winter nights within hearing of the bell to lose their way in the country, might be informed of the time of night and receive some guidance into their right way.

That bell is still rung in the evening, but not in the morning, though quite recently the benefaction was actually lost. The land was sold, and the purchaser refused to pay the rent-charge, as no one quite knew upon what particular piece of the land the payment was due. However another anonymous benefactor made the matter right, and the sexton tolls the bell.

We do not need its guidance now as open lands have been enclosed and there are roads to guide us with plenty of sign-boards. We will not take the main and quickest road to our destination, but wander on from the cross-roads nigh the "Stag and Hounds Inn" to the "Hare and Hounds Inn," a favourite meet of the Garth Hunt, where a turning to the right leads to a beautiful park and house called Billingbear. Anciently the manor belonged to the See of Winchester and was surrendered to King Edward VI in 1551, who granted it to Henry Neville, gentleman of the bedchamber. These Nevilles were an ancient and illustrious family. They held possessions in the Forest from Saxon days, and for hundreds of years were "Keepers by inheritance." In addition to Billingbear they held the whole Bailiwick of Fiennes, an extensive district, including Bray, Winkfield, Bracknell and Wokingham, the manor of Wargrave, and Henry Neville was recommended by the King for Sheriff of Berkshire. He married Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of Sir John Gresham, the rich London merchant. He was a staunch supporter of the New Learning and the Reformation, and rose into particular favour with Edward VI. When Mary came to the throne these grants were annulled, but under Queen Elizabeth he rose again into still higher favour, was knighted and restored to his estates. He was very zealous in persecuting Recusants, and as a keeper of Sunninghill Park, and with many occupations he sighed "for a quiet day to go a-wooing in." He died in 1593 at Billingbear and lies buried at the church of Waltham St. Lawrence. He was the builder of this beautiful house

which was begun in 1567, and is of early Elizabethan character. There is happily extant a seventeenth century description of this charming building. In 1669 Cosmo, Duke of Tuscany, stayed two days there, and one of his suite wrote an account of his visit. The manuscript contains an illustration showing the front of the house at that date, almost exactly as it is now. Like most Elizabethan houses its plan is **E** shaped, consisting of a central portion with wings at each end and a porch. The hall is a large oak-panelled room, and when the house had the late Mr. C. T. D. Crews, High Sheriff for Berkshire, for a tenant, it was replete with fine old furniture, a collection of armour and weapons and much else that transported one's mind to the days of "Merry England," and especially on one evening when the High Sheriff gave a ball, though ruffs and farthingales were absent the old house seemed to recall its ancient revels and revive the happier time when hearts were lighter than they are to-day and care rode less heavily behind each weary traveller.

So the good sportsman, Sir Henry Neville, the builder of Billingbear, slept with his fathers in Waltham St. Lawrence church, and his son Henry reigned in his stead. He had a mind above the hunting of stags, and Queen Elizabeth sent him as her ambassador to the Court of France, bidding him "give orders for restraint of killing game and deer in Mote and Sunninghill Parks in Windsor Forest during your absence." But evil fate and their own folly dogged the Nevilles from that day forward. Sir Henry was mixed up with plots and conspiracies, and had to pay an enormous fine and to suffer a lodgment in the Tower. James I restored him to some favour, but the glory of the Nevilles had begun to fade and could not be resuscitated. Another Henry Neville succeeded in 1615 and immediately began a lawsuit with the Crown about his rights to certain lands in the Forest, and, worried to death, he passed away in 1629. He left two sons, Richard, who resided at Billingbear, and Henry. They took opposite sides

in the Civil War. Richard fought for the king, and when the royal cause failed he had to pay a ruinous fine. A curious entry occurs in the Croydon Registers : " 1646 Henry Nevill, the son of Colonell Nevil. The Colonall's name is Richard Nevil of *the bill and beare* in barkshire." Subsequently the property passed to Richard Aldworth who took the name of Neville and was the ancestor of Lord Braybrooke, the present owner.

Bidding farewell to the noble old house we wander on to Wokingham, passing a hunting lodge on the way that retains in its interior some relics of its former greatness, and soon the ancient forest town appears in sight. Modern houses and villas on the outskirts seem to dispute its claim to antiquity, but the view of the grand old church standing out from its encircling trees removes any doubts that might arise. Some years ago it narrowly escaped demolition, but was happily saved by the zeal of the parishioners. The nave arcade consisting of five bays, is of chalk, the piers being remarkably lofty and date back to the fifteenth century. There is a clerestory and open timber roof. Two windows at the end of the transept are early fourteenth century work, but the building has been so much restored that many of its ancient features are obliterated. There is a curious brass with an inscription difficult to decipher. It shows a man and woman kneeling at a prayer-desk. A coat of arms is engraved and the following verses I have contrived to read :

Wit, wealth, shape, birth, lie buried here
These while we live we value all too deare
Such as leave us when we leave our breath
Unfaithful friends forsaking us in death,
No covenant with the grave we must resign
Some of us now, and some another time,
He liveth not long that many years can tell,
But he liveth ever more who liveth well.

Also we see the royal arms of Queen Elizabeth and a tombstone recording the memory of Thomas Godwin, Bishop of

Bath and Wells, who was born at Wokingham. The epitaph was written by his son, Francis Godwin, Bishop of Hereford, the learned author of *De Præsulibus Angeliæ Commentarius*, and informs us that he died of an ague in 1590 at his native town, whither he had removed by the advice of his physicians.

The north choir aisle was a chantry chapel dedicated to Our Lady, and there was a chantry priest, who was a very busy person, and did not confine his labours to celebrating masses for the souls of the family of the founder of the chantry. He was bound to say mass, mattins and evensong daily with other suffrages in the parish church, and often served as a school-master. Robert Avis, M.A., was the incumbent of the chantry when all chantries were dissolved in the time of Edward VI. He received £12 2s. 6½d. for his services, and he acted as master of the grammar school connected with the chantry.

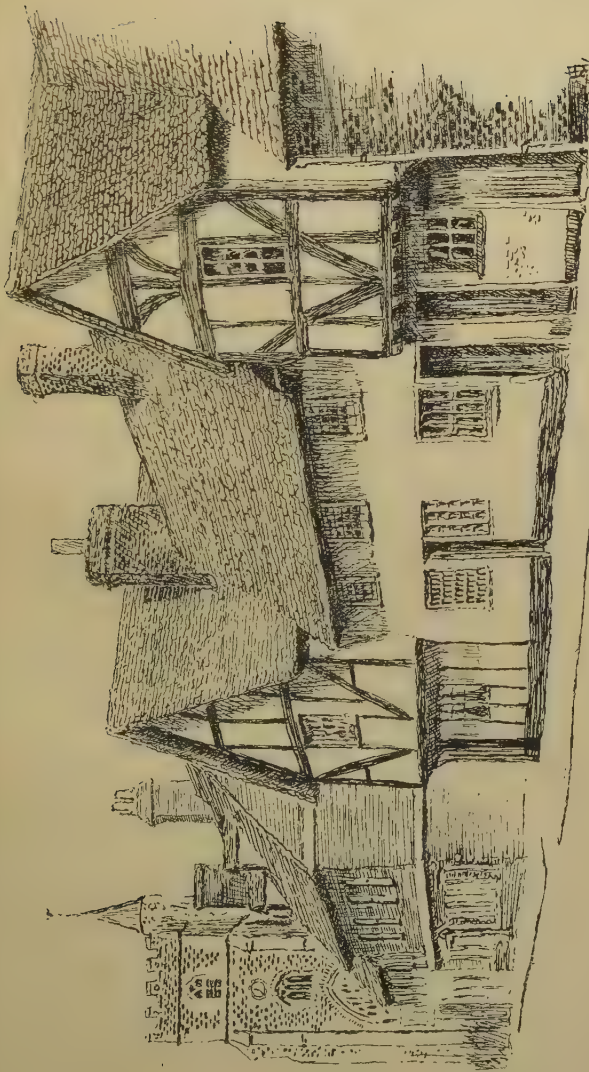
The church was richly furnished before the Reformation with ornaments and plate and vestments. The Commissioners of Edward VI visited Wokingham and carried away with them 162 oz. of silver plate, leaving one solitary chalice behind them. The font should be noticed. It belongs to the Perpendicular period, and we see inscribed upon it the Tudor rose, foliated crosses and some curious animal forms above the stem. On the corbels of the nave are carved the heads of kings and bishops.

In the churchyard is a monument with a wonderfully long inscription to the memory of the Beaver family and its connexions. It tells of Richard Beaver who, with his brother-in-law, Sir Richard Harrison of Hurst, raised three troops of horse for King Charles I and maintained them for years at his own expense, served with Algernon Simes of Little Park, Windsor, Lord Thomas Howard, Earl of Berkshire, suffering "persecution, sequestration, composition, etc." One of the relatives, Thomas Bowden, was "a coal merchant and greatly reduced by serving the Court, for he lost his debt of thousands

by the unfortunate king being destroyed." Another relative, Henry Deane, who in his eighty-fifth year "changed this life for a better, was greatly reduced by lending his substance to John Hawes of this parish, brewer, which he lost, so that he kept a public house for his living, and afterwards by King James's Civil wars more reduced having nothing whatever left but a tenement of £3 per annum. He was obliged to earn his living from the age of fifty years (not being used to work) for about thirty years more till near his end by gardening." "He was patient, healthy, of a cheerful and honest heart." After enumerating other members of the family the inscription concludes with this solemn warning :

"Let this deter others, lest they ruin themselves and their families, as Algernon, Alexander and the said Richard, did theirs. Here you see a pattern worthy of imitation."

Leaving the church we pass along Rose Street, the oldest part of the town, with charmingly picturesque half-timbered sixteenth century cottages, and then reach the market place. The present unsightly Victorian Town Hall, erected in the 'sixties, took the place of an interesting earlier building with an undercroft, supported on pillars, wherein the business of the old municipal town was transacted. It is surrounded by some old houses. On the east next to the "Bush Inn" stood the "Old Rose Inn," concerning which some stories are told. The present "Rose Inn," a picturesque old building with its narrow passage into the inn-yard, not exactly adapted for a coach and four. It is a very charming old-fashioned hostelry, and much frequented in modern days. The old "Rose" on the east side of the market place had cause to blush on one occasion when some wits of the day, Gay, Swift, Pope and Arbuthnot, were detained there by the wet weather, and amused themselves by composing a song in praise of the charms of Molly Mogg, one of the daughters of the landlord, John Mogg. She had a sister named Sally, who was also a handsome beauty. Molly was much admired by the young



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squire of Arborfield, Edward Standen ; but she treated his attentions with scorn and refused to marry him. The wits, observing his melancholy manners, composed a poem in praise of Molly. Each poet contributed a verse as they sang of the disconsolate lover :

His brains all lost in a fog
And nothing could give satisfaction
But thinking of sweet Molly Mogg.

Edward Standen was the last of his race, and is always said to have pined away and died at the early age of twenty-seven. Every account of Wokingham records this supposed fact. It is unpleasant to be obliged to dispel illusions. However, I have studied the pedigree of the Standen family of Arborfield, and find that this Edward Standen married a lady named Eleanor, and therefore consoled himself after his youthful disappointment.¹ He died childless. Molly lived to the age of sixty-seven and died unmarried. Some have supposed that Sally was the scornful and reluctant maid who won the affections of the young squire, but I refuse to dethrone Molly from her rightful place.

If you had visited Wokingham a century ago on St. Thomas's Day, you would have witnessed a strange and curious sight. It was the annual bull-baiting day, and the sport was endowed by one George Staverton ; having himself, it is said, been gored by a bull, he bequeathed to the town the rent of a house at Staines, producing £6 a year, to provide a bull to be baited,

¹ Mr. Vincent in his *Highways and Byways in Berkshire* is hopelessly muddled about Edward Standen, Miss Mitford and Molly Mogg. When Miss Mitford refers to the ruined state of the house about twenty years prior to her writing *Our Village*, she was telling the sad story of the Dawson family, not of the Standens. Mr. Vincent seems to have been in entire ignorance of the descent of the Manor, and of the Reeves and Dawsons who held it after the death of Mrs. Edward Standen. Edward Standen's Will is at Somerset House and was proved by his wife, sole executrix, April 7, 1731. One seldom finds so many errors in a single page as in Mr. Vincent's story.

the flesh to be given to the poor, the hide for children's shoes, and the sport for the enjoyment of all beholders. The property increasing in value enabled the trustees to provide two bulls, and crowds flocked from all the country side to witness the spectacle.

Mr. Alderman Darter of Reading, as a boy, was present on the occasion in 1815, and he was good enough to describe it to the writer. It was a cold, damp, dull day when he with a companion drove from Reading to see the "sport." As they drew near the town, the road became crowded with carriages and pedestrians hurrying in the same direction. Arrived at the market place, the younger man found a place in a window overlooking the scene, while the elder, a tall fellow, evidently a habitue of the bull ring, joined the crowd outside. The spectators filled every window, and in some cases had seated themselves on the roofs of the houses. Carriages, filled with occupants, were drawn up in front of the shops, and all available standing room on the footpaths and roadway was filled by visitors, townspeople, and parishioners. A cry arises, "room for the Alderman and Burgesses." The Corporation of Wokingham dates from Saxon times, and the chief-magistrate was still called "the Alderman," the town having refused steadily for eight centuries to adopt the new-fangled Norman title of "Mayor." The remaining members of the Corporation were "Burgesses." Here they come, first pushing a way through the crowd, two "ale-tasters" with wands of office surmounted by the acorn, the Corporation crest; then two sergeants of the mace, the mace-bearer, the alderman, burgesses, town clerk, and others. The alderman takes his seat with his friends in the large window of the old "Red Lion Inn," and gives the signal that the sport is to begin. Shouts are heard and a commotion is evident in a corner of the crowd. Here he comes, the first bull, led by a dozen strong men, a rope round his horns and a chain fifteen feet long, into the middle of the market-place, where the end



of the chain is fastened to a strong staple in a post level with the ground. Away go his keepers. In a moment the bull has cleared the ring for the coming contest. With head down and tail erect, he sweeps round at the full extent of his chain, and is all alone in the centre of a circle thirty feet in diameter. "A lane! a lane!" and quickly the crowd has given way to form a narrow passage, at the end of which we see a man holding a dog between his knees. His owner cries "Set on!" and the dog released, tears down the lane, through hoops held at regular intervals, right at the face of the bull, who has heard his yelp and is awaiting him. The dog goes for the bull's nose; the animal keeps him off by always presenting a horn to his advance. He does not prod at the dog, but tries to sweep the horn along the ground under the dog's belly. The dog, quite conscious of the meaning of these tactics, is never for a moment still, but dancing to and fro, tries to get through the bull's guard. Suddenly the bull manages to get his horn beneath the dog, and up he goes into the air, some twenty or thirty feet high. "Catch the dog, quick. He'll be done for if he touches the ground." Our friend from Reading holds out a pair of long arms, and down comes the dog, bespattering, as he falls into them, the man's face and holiday clothes with blood and mud.

Another dog is now ready. His fate is more speedily determined than that of his predecessor. The bull, almost immediately, sends him flying into the air, so high that he falls on the roof of the Town Hall, and is impaled on some spikes.

We must not follow the barbarous so-called sport further, except to listen to the eager shouts of the crowd "A pin! A pin!" when a dog more successful than the rest has succeeded in fastening its teeth in the cartilage of the poor animal's nose. Sometimes the bull breaks away and scatters the crowd in all directions, overturning perhaps a stall of apples with the old woman in charge of it; and there is a picture in exist-

ence of some boys who climbed the solitary tree in the market place, to which the bull's chain became attached ; and when the tree swayed and jerked, and the crowd cried that it was coming down, the boys came down like apples in a gale, some on the bull's back, some in the slush and mud. At the close of the day, when drink had made men " full of quarrel and offence," there were disputes and fighting and rough horse-play, and in the Parish Registers there is a tell-tale entry, " Martha May, aged 55, who was hurt by fighters after Bull-baiting, was buried December 31, 1808." As early as 1801 a sermon was preached in the parish church of Wokingham on " Barbarity to God's dumb creation," containing a severe condemnation of the ancient practice, but it was not until St. Thomas's Day, 1832, that the last baiting took place. The bulls are still slaughtered, but in a more merciful fashion, and the meat given to the poor.

If you go beneath the archway of Mr. Sale's shop which was formerly an inn, you will find at the end of the passage a footpath that bears the name " Cock Walk," and in what is now a potato ground in former days was a famous Cock Pit. Here thousands of pounds were won and lost in backing the rival birds. Here the gentlemen of Berkshire and Hampshire had annual contests, and I have seen in the columns of the *Reading Mercury*, one of the oldest newspapers in the kingdom that still survives, advertisements of these contests with minute laws and regulations governing the sport. But Wokingham history is not confined to cruel and brutal sports. Surrounded by the great Forest, in the midst of the royal domain and hunting ground, Wokingham seems to have passed a tranquil and placid existence, comparatively undisturbed by the great social and political convulsions which harassed the life of more important places. When we pass into the Town Hall and study the old charters and documents we find much of interest. The Borough is of ancient origin. In the charter that was granted to the town by Queen Elizabeth

it is stated "by all the time whereof no memory of man is to the contrary there have been enjoyed certain liberties, privileges, customs, as we are credibly informed. One tea to be holden yearly about the feast of Easter and a Court Baron by one steward of the Manor of Sonning in the presence of the Alderman of Wokingham." No memory of man was to the contrary that Wokingham possessed its ancient privileges and existed under a regular municipal constitution, which Queen Elizabeth by her charter confirmed "to her good and faithful subjects." This charter then proceeds to give a sketch of what that constitution was, the form of which carries us back straight to Saxon times. The chief man in the town was called the Alderman, as already explained, and so remained until 1885 when the old Corporation was dissolved and a new charter of incorporation was granted, and the governing body of the town assimilated itself to other municipalities. A market was held every Tuesday, and two fairs every year. The Court Baron was the old Manorial Court, where, before the lord of the manor, the officers of the borough were selected, and the Court Leet was the Borough Court, where prisoners were tried and the affairs of the township discussed and arranged.

Moreover as Wokingham was a Forest town, the Forest Courts were held there, or at Windsor, for the Berkshire portion. The justice of the Forest, or his deputy presided, and the inquisitions were made before him by the various Forest officials, such as the warden or chief forester, the foresters, verderers, regards and free tenants. In the Public Record Office there are a large number of these inquisitions dating from 1363 to 1375. At an inquisition held at Wokingham on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1371, before John de Foxle, the Warden of the Court, and others, William Benefeld, of Winkfield, was prosecuted for having killed a hind-calf with grey hounds on the feast of St. Lawrence. On one occasion Oliver, rector of the church of Ruscombe, was charged with shooting a

stag with bow and arrows. Under the Forest Pleas there was much formality in these courts. At the opening each forester had to present his horn on bended knee to the chief justice in eyre, and each woodman his axe; and these insignia of office were not returned until a fine of half a mark had been rendered. In the reign of Charles I these Forest Pleas, after long abeyance, were revived, much to the resentment of our Berkshire foresters and woodmen.

The origin of the name Wokingham is worth noting. A century ago the inhabitants thought that the name was connected with the oak tree, and spelt it Oakingham. In earlier maps it appeared as Okingham or Okyngham, but in its earliest form it is printed Wokingham (cf. Feudal Aids and Close Rolls). The prefix Wokinga is the Anglo-Saxon genitive, plural Woccinga, and means the sons of Woce, and *ham* in this case means "home"; hence the place-name means "the home of the Woccinga or sons of Woce, a Saxon settlement of a family which also left its name behind at Woking in Surrey. Probably the latter was their first settlement.

The late Bishop of Oxford, the learned historian, Dr. Stubbs, gave me an interesting document of the date 708-715 A.D., a Bull of Pope Constantine contained in a chartulary of the Abbey of Peterborough, or Medeshamstede, as it was then called. The Bull referred to the existence of a monastery somewhere in the territory of the Wokings, it is thought at Wokingham. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refers to this monastery which an Ealdorman named Brorda desired off a King of the Mercians to make free. But that is a large subject, and I have no space for its discussion during these wanderings. Ecclesiastically the place was a chapelry of Sonning, a village on the Thames, a few miles away, where the Bishops of Salisbury had a palace, and Wokingham was "a parcel of his lordship of Sonning," and in 1227 he had a grant from the Crown that he might hold his market at Wokingham, and in 1258 two fairs at the festivals of St. Bar-

nabas and All Saints. The latter is still held, and the date corresponds with the usual custom of holding the fair on or near the Festival of the Saints to whom the church is dedicated.

James I gave another charter to the town in 1613 which remained in force until the place was re-incorporated in 1885. The government of the town was vested in an alderman, seven capital burgesses and twelve secondary burgesses who constituted the Common Council, and he gave them permission to build a guildhall and a prison. This was the Town Hall built soon after the granting of the charter which gave place about the year 1865 to the present somewhat unsightly structure. James I also interested himself in silk manufacture, and the staple industry of the town was silk-throwing and knitting silk stockings. In some gardens of the older houses we still find large mulberry trees which were planted to provide food for the silkworms.

The walls of the Town Hall are adorned with many interesting portraits. It is not known whence and how they came there. Some are valuable and others good copies. The gem of the collection is a portrait of George I by Sir Godfrey Kneller, a genuine painting of great value and interest. In the distance you see a view of Westminster Abbey and the Thames. Another portrait is that of Prince George of Denmark, the husband of Queen Anne, who received the title of Baron Wokingham, as well as Earl of Kendal and Duke of Cumberland. He has a flowing wig and is dressed in a kilt with steel-plated armour. A battle scene appears in the distance. "Est-il possible," as his father-in-law, James II, contemptuously styled him, looks much more noble than he did in real life. Amongst other pictures we may notice the following : a lady unknown, generally supposed to be Queen Elizabeth, but that is not true. It may have been Queen Anne of Denmark, the wife of James I, but her hair is of the wrong colour ; Charles II an original picture of the period after the manner of Sir Peter Lely ; William III in his coronation

robes (an inferior copy) ; James II, a contemporary copy, the original probably by Sir Peter Lely ; Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, a poor copy of the fine painting by Vandyck, now at Petworth ; Archbishop Laud, a copy of one at Lambeth Palace ; Charles I, a poor portrait ; George I in his coronation robes, an inferior copy, and not to be compared with the other portrait of the king ; the Duke of Marlborough, a contemporary copy of Kneller's portrait ; Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough by Michael Dahl—some have thought that this is Kneller's work, but the freedom and fluttering of the pale blue drapery look more graceful than Kneller's painting and resemble Dahl's ; Queen Anne, a copy of Kneller's portrait, and a lady and child which is rather a puzzle. She is attired in black velvet, and in the middle of her forehead is a broad flat wedge, like a piece of black cloth. This is the seventeenth century form of the garb of widowhood for royal and noble persons. The portrait is probably of Queen Henrietta Marie and one of her daughters by Zib. Amongst the other treasures in the hall is a massive mace that bears the date 1758.

Leaving the Town Hall a pleasant footpath leads to Lucas's Hospital, a very charming building, consisting of a central portion and two wings, and founded by Henry Lucas by his will dated June 11, 1663. It was placed in the custody of the Drapers' Company of the City of London. The east wing is occupied by a chapel, the west wing by the master's lodging. There is accommodation for about fifteen old men to be selected from divers parishes in Berks and Surrey. The Hospital looks very calm and peaceful, especially on a summer's evening when the old men are sitting in front of their beautiful home.

Wokingham is entitled to one more entry on the scroll of fame. It was the birthplace of a famous race of bell-founders who began their career in this town in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Several bells are still in existence which

came from this foundry. Another bell-making establishment was founded in the town in the sixteenth century. At a meeting of bell-ringers I once told them the story of these foundries, and wondered where they could have been situated. A ringer assured me that a certain road was called by the people Bell Lane, though this was not its regular official name. Doubtless popular tradition has preserved the old site.

In the Broad Street there are several good eighteenth century substantial houses with fine gardens at the back, and nearly opposite to St. Paul's Church there is an old manor house called the Beches. It takes its name from Robert de la Beche, who belonged to the old family of the de la Beches of Aldworth, who gave their name to Beach Hill near Mortimer. The only daughter of Robert married one John Witelock in 1450 in the reign of Henry VI, who is described as thus becoming possessed of "the Manor of Beches, near Ockingham, Berks." The old front door bears the date 1624 and the initials R. and E.H., which may stand for Richard Harrison and his wife; but at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was owned by Richard Hawe.

I must not pass over one other side in the life of the town, though it does not bring it much credit. It must be confessed that in times not very far remote we were rather a lawless lot. For generations, for centuries, the inhabitants of our forest have been deer-stealers, poachers, coney-catchers and trappers. Some of the élite of the profession of highwaymen have exercised their calling upon the borders of Berkshire and within the county itself. The great moor between Wokingham and Bagshot was the favourite haunt of the owler, the footpad and the highwayman. Bagshot Heath, which stretched from Ascot Heath to Frimsby Ridge and Western Surrey was noted for the escapades of the knights of the road, and is associated with the élite of the profession. Claude Duval, "Old Tyburn's glory," had a house near Bagshot

that still stands, a picturesque small farmhouse which possessed a hiding hole in the chimney. Once he robbed Squire Roper, the Master of the Royal Buckhounds in the time of Charles II, when hunting by himself in our Forest. He relieved him of fifty guineas and bound him hand and foot to a tree. The story of Duval's dancing a coranto on the heath with Lady Richardson and for this privilege foregoing a large part of his booty is perfectly authentic. Dick Turpin took purses in our Forest and waylaid coaches, and there were less illustrious names on the list of marauders. One Dibley and his gang were the terror of Berkshire. On Bagshot Heath there is an inn now called the "Jolly Farmer." Its old name was the "Golden Farmer," so named after a certain William Davies, who was hanged in chains near this spot. He was a respectable Gloucestershire farmer when not engaged by his love of adventure in nefarious crimes, and always took gold from his victim's purse, never notes or other valuables. His neighbours used to wonder why he always paid his bills with gold, and the cottagers used to find guineas put beneath their doors at night. At last he was recognized and caught in London, and his end was similar to that of most of his fellows.

The whole district at the end of the eighteenth century was lawless. Gilbert White tells of the poachers in his day. "All the country was wild about deer-stealing. Unless he was a hunter, as they affected to call themselves, no young person was allowed to be possessed of manhood or gallantry." Then arose the custom of "Blacking." The rascals blacked their faces, terrorized the farmers, committed murder, levied blackmail, and did as they listed. The Waltham Blacks roamed in Hampshire, and Wokingham had a gang of its own, which for some years infested our Forest under the leadership of a farmer named William Shorter. Terrible deeds did these Wokingham Blacks commit. They tried to intimidate the magistrates, and revenged themselves cruelly

on all who dared to resist them. Sir John Cope, of Bramshill, sentenced one of their number, and next morning 500 pounds' worth of his young plantations were destroyed. Lord Arran of Bagshot killed some of their dogs, and they threatened to burn his house down.

Miles, a keeper at Windsor, arrested a poacher named Hughes, who was fined £10 and had his guns taken from him. The money was placed in the hands of a churchwarden. The gang besieged his house and threatened to burn it down if the money was not returned to them, and in fear and trembling the official refunded it. Then the Blacks went to the house of the keeper Miles, maltreated him and would have shot him, but their guns flashed in the pan. His young son was not so fortunate. As he put his head out of the window to remonstrate with them, they shot him dead.

Captain Kempthorne has discovered among the Treasury Papers in the Public Record Office the accounts of a man named Nunn, one of the officials of the Forest, who in 1722 with much danger to his life searched for the culprits, established a system of spies, paid large sums for information and very ably performed his duties. Colonel Negus was the ranger or deputy-ranger of the Forest and lived at Bigshotte Rayles, now called Ravenswood, and was there engaged in inventing the beverage that bears his name, though the Blacks caused him great anxiety. The famous "Black Act," was passed, making it a felony to be guilty of "blacking." The rascals were caught at last. Four were hanged in chains, six transported and many others were convicted. The leader, William Shorter, managed to escape and was not re-captured when these interesting accounts were closed.

Life in our country town is usually very peaceful and placid, but in recent years some building estates have been developed, and the old town hardly recognizes itself. However, it has not lost its calm or its charm, and there are many worse places that one might choose for one's home than the good old

Forest town of Wokingham. There we can rest for the night at the " Rose " and dream of bull-baitings and Molly Mogg, and Pope and Gay and the " Blacks " and other notables in whose company we have been lingering.

From Wokingham to Maidenhead

THERE are sundry highways and byways in the Forest which it would be pleasant to explore, but all these cannot be traversed during our present pilgrimage. One journey, however, which leads into beautiful places may be indicated. Leave Wokingham by the northern by-lane opposite St. Paul's Church, a fine modern building erected by the late generous squire of Bear Wood, Mr. John Walter, his architect being Woodyer. Passing the Holt, a much modernized seventeenth century house, and Bill Hill, the residence of the Leveson-Gower family, and arrive at Hurst, a long, straggling, delightful village with a picturesque old church and almshouse. The church has a fine brick tower, erected in 1512, and a host of interesting monuments, of ancient worthies of the seventeenth century. In 1300 the western part of the nave was taken down and rebuilt, and the roof, porch and chancel added. The Jacobean pulpit has a famous hour-glass stand very similar to that at Binfield, with painted scroll-work and the letters "E.A. 1636," a remarkable screen painted and gilt with arms and the cognisance of Henry, Prince of Wales, son of James I. The Harrisons and Wards, Windebanks and Biggs were the chief families of Hurst in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Richard Ward was "Audoe proquestor" through four reigns and died in 1574. The pillars on the north side of the nave are of Norman character. In 1627 and 1638 alterations were made.

and a new chancel aisle erected. In this church Archbishop Laud preached, as he was a friend of the Windebanks and used to stay at Haines Hill, a fine old house in the parish which we shall visit presently. Hurst House stands close to the church. The old house was built by Richard Ward in Tudor times, but was pulled down and rebuilt by the late Rev. A. A. Cameron, Vicar of Hurst. All the old materials were again used, the ancient finely carved oak panelling, massive doorways, etc., being carefully preserved.

A remarkable feature of the old houses in the neighbourhood is the small extent of the estates which in olden times belonged to them. The probable reason of this is that the early occupants were connected with the court at Windsor, as secretaries, cofferers, etc., and the occupation was residential, not territorial; and these grants of estates being in the Forest, were not allowed to be large lest they should interfere with the hunting and the deer. Billingbear was an exception to this rule, as it was the chief estate in the neighbourhood. The existence of so many places called Hatches shows the old internal boundaries of the Forest. Thus close to Hurst is Hinton Hatch, and there is a line of Hatches extending from Hare Hatch to the east of Wokingham. Hatch, of course, means a gate. The number of Lodges implies the same condition of affairs. These were the houses of the chief foresters. A favourite name for inns in the Forest district is the "Green Man"—there is one in Hurst—where the green-clad foresters used to refresh themselves when they were hunting or minding the deer.

Indications of former ownership by the Crown are sometimes discovered under the bark of trees when they have been cut down. I have seen the marks of the royal crown grown to a large size with the growth of the trees on some of the beeches, after they had fallen, in Mr. Walter's Park at Bearwood.

About a mile from the church is the interesting old

house of Haines Hill, the home of the late Master of the Garth Hunt, and now that of his nephew, Captain Godsall.

The older portion was Elizabethan or Early Jacobean, and the estate was held by William Hide, who died in 1589. It was then acquired by the Windebank family. Thomas Windebank was living in the parish in 1593, died in 1607, and left his estate to his son, Sir Francis Windebank, Secretary of State to Charles I. He was a friend of Archbishop Laud, who often stayed here and recorded his visits in his diary. Sir Francis was an ardent royalist; he was arrested by the Parliament in 1640, escaped, crossed to France, and died six years later. His estates were sequestered, and passed into the hands of Richard Bigg, son of a merchant tailor, of London, and a partisan of Cromwell. At the Restoration he contrived to retain the property, and obtained a pardon from the King, which is still in the long gallery of the house. The Biggs retained the property till the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was acquired by James Edward Colleton, who married Lady Anne Cowper, daughter of the first Earl Cowper. After his death it passed to the Garth family, his cousin, Mr. C. Garth, taking the name of Colleton. Captain Thomas Garth succeeded in 1818, and was followed by his son, Mr. Thomas Colleton Garth, the famous and much-loved squire and M.F.H., founder of the Garth Hunt in 1852. On his death in 1907 his sister, Mrs. Shifner, succeeded, and was followed in 1910 by her nephew, Captain Godsall. The windows and walls of the ends of the gallery were rebuilt in the style of Queen Anne in 1716 by the Biggs. The front of the mansion was built by Mr. Colleton about 1760, replacing two wings resembling those now existing at the back. It was formerly H shaped in plan. Most of the internal ornamentation is of Queen Anne date and the front interior portion Mid-Georgian. There are some interesting pictures by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Lely, Kneller, and other masters,

including one of Sir Samuel Garth which was originally in the Kitcat Club.

The almshouses were erected by William Barber in 1664, a beautiful home of rest for aged folk, and the old "Castle Inn" close by with them and the church form as picturesque group of buildings as you would wish to see. The inn was formerly known as the church house, a building that every self-respecting village prided itself upon possessing. There church ales and similar rural festivals were celebrated. Aubrey tells us :

"In every parish was a church house, to which belonged spits, crocks, and other utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met. The young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc., the ancients (i.e. the old folks) sitting gravely by, and looking on."

The churchwardens bought and received presents of, a large quantity of malt, which they brewed into beer and sold to the company. Hence these feasts were called "church ales," and were held on the feast of the dedication of the church and at other festivals, the proceeds being devoted to the relief of the poor, the repair of the church and other excellent objects. The fine old bowling green with turf is as ancient as the yews that shade it, and in modern days great matches have been played there, Mr. Grave always being one of the champions.

From Hurst we could make our way to Sonning, one of the prettiest villages in England, situated on the Thames with an old bridge across the river. It is a very ancient place, and was the ecclesiastical centre of the district, as I have already remarked. It contained an episcopal palace where in mediæval times the Bishops of Salisbury resided, and previous to the formation of the Sarum See the Bishops of Ramsbury and Sherborne who were sometimes styled Bishops of Sonning. Their names were Athelstan, Odo, Osulf, Alfstan, Alfgar, Sigeric, Alfric, Brightwold and Heremann. Mr. Charles E.

Keyser, has recently excavated this old palace and plans have been made and many interesting objects discovered. To this house came Queen Isabella of Valois, the child-wife of King Richard II, when he was in the hands of his enemies and had been borne away to prison and to death. Queen Elizabeth liked the palace and the beautiful river-side village, and forcibly effected an exchange for other lands. The manor was conferred upon the Rich family, who were great benefactors to the place. The church is a noble building, the oldest portions dating from the thirteenth century, with much Decorated additions, and it has many interesting memorials.

Proceeding northward from Hurst we come to Twyford, the twin-ford, and Ruscombe with its fine brick tower and nave built in 1639 and a thirteenth century chancel wherein are lancet windows, on the splays of which are some rural paintings, representing SS. Peter, Paul, Stephen and James. You can see on the vane of the tower the date of its building with the royal initials "C.R." A local antiquary was once expatiating upon this tower and on the excellence of its architecture, and said, "The parishioners are very proud of this tower, seeing that it was built by a very famous architect whose initials are in the vane, C.R., Christopher Ren!" There is no chancel arch, but in place thereof is a large oak beam, and on the plaster wall above are inscribed the Ten Commandments in Old English lettering. The Jacobean pulpit happily retains its sounding board. In the belfry is a very old chest with three locks. A mediæval bell hangs in the belfry inscribed *Sancta Clateor*, probably cast at the Wokingham foundry in the fifteenth century. Another bell was cast by Joseph Carter of the Reading foundry in 1589.

The old manor house of Northbury has now degenerated into two cottages; that of Southberry has been pulled down; but there is in the parish a beautiful Elizabethan mansion named Stanlake, erected by Richard Aldworth, and now owned by the Barker family. The registers bear witness to a fight

that took place here in the Civil War, when thirteen soldiers were slain and buried, and a dread plague in 1646 that carried off many poor people.

From 1710 to his death in 1718 William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, lived at Ruscombe, and thus brought undying fame to the village. The house in which he resided was pulled down by General Leveson-Gower in 1830. That was unfortunate. If it had been left standing and turned into a Penn museum, thousands of American pilgrims would have flocked to Ruscombe to worship at the shrine of their great countryman. The Enclosure Act altered very much the appearance of the village and Ruscombe Green, the site of village merry-makings, on which the parishioners grazed their cattle, has entirely vanished. A word must be said about the place name. Professor Skeat erred in calling it "rush combe," a deep hollow wherein the rushes grow; whereas its early form was Rothescamp, an open unenclosed field, corrupted into combe by Norman French-folk. I will not venture to hazard a guess with regard to Rothescamp, but will leave its interpretation to the skill of the learned reader.

We might continue our journey northward across open country to the pleasant river-side village of Wargrave, the old church of which fell a victim to the insensate rage of the suffragettes and was entirely burnt down just before the war. A fine new church has arisen from its ashes. All the monuments, the Jacobean pulpit and much else of interest, were destroyed, including the monument of Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, who was killed by a fall from his horse. In the churchyard was buried Madame Tussaud, the founder of the immortal waxwork exhibition, and at Wargrave Hill lived Cowper's friend, Joseph Hill, the "Septus," to whom he often wrote. An interesting road leads with many steep hills and declines past the beautiful hanging woods of Park Place, where there are some megalithic monuments transported from Jersey—the house which was once a royal

residence and in which lived Frederick Prince of Wales, and many illustrious personages, has been pulled down and a large new one erected by the late Mr. Noble, and so on to Henley replete with recollections of many strenuous contests in the world-renowned Regatta.

But we will continue our present journey from Ruscombe in an easterly direction to Waltham St. Lawrence, where is the old "Bell Inn," a coaching hostel, a fine gabled half-timbered building standing opposite the village pound and a much restored church, but it retains much that is interesting. The eastern arcades of the nave are Decorated work, but the two western are Norman, and I venture to suggest that the church had at one time a central Norman tower, which may have fallen in the fourteenth century, destroyed the eastern portion of the arcade, and necessitated the reconstruction of those arches. The low western tower belongs to the same period, and has a Decorated west window and a bold stair turret. In the north-east side of the choir is a chantry chapel, now used as a vestry. It has a three-light square-headed Perpendicular window, in one corner of which there is a bit of ancient ruby glass and an interesting fifteenth century piscina. Here is the tomb of Sir Henry Neville, who, as we have seen, was the builder of Billingbear. There are a number of votive crosses on the east pier of the eastern of the Norman arches of the south nave arcade.

These votive crosses have sometimes puzzled people. They call them "consecration crosses," which they certainly are not. In olden days a journey was a mighty undertaking, entailing vast preparations, and often much danger from outlaws and robbers, who especially in our Forest were plentiful, from drowning in crossing fords and other perils. Hence persons before they started would carve or scratch a cross upon the jambs of a church door or on a pillar, registering a vow that if they returned in safety they would make some thankoffering to God for His protection—a very pious and excellent custom.

Waltham appears in its earliest form as Wealtham, and Skeat conjectures that it signifies "decayed house," a description that hardly applies to this prosperous little village.

Less than a mile further brings us to the very beautiful fourteenth century church of Shottesbrook, one of the most architecturally interesting in the county. It was a collegiate church, i.e., one attached to a college, a society of secular clergy, or canons, who were charged with the duty of performing divine services in cathedrals or parish churches, or of chanting masses for the repose of the souls of deceased benefactors. These bodies were, of course, distinct from the regular clergy or monks. They took no monastic vows; could retain their private property, and were not much esteemed by the monks. Many of our cathedrals were collegiate. At Shottesbrook there was a small college consisting of a warden and five priests and an endowment of £30 a year, founded by a good squire, Sir William Tressell, who hove from Staffordshire; and in connexion with his college built this noble church about the year 1337. An earlier church stood here, as it is mentioned in Domesday; but we can hardly regret its disappearance, seeing that it has been replaced by this very noble successor. It is built in the Decorated style, when English architecture attained to its greatest beauty. It is cruciform and has no aisles, with a central tower and tall, ribbed spire. The tower has a good staircase turret. The chief features of the exterior are the beautiful proportions of the whole, the delicate trefoiled caps to the buttresses and the flowing tracery of the large east and west windows. It is almost flamboyant like some French tracery and consists chiefly of foliated ellipses intertwined into the most intricate patterns, sometimes resembling two or more figures of 8 conjoined.

In the south transept a blocked arch shows where the passage from the college buildings entered the church. A half-timbered cottage on the south side used to mark the site

of these buildings, but this has been transformed into a fine modern dwelling, the architecture of which is reminiscent of the collegiate habitations, but I question whether the canons grew such beautiful flowers and had rose-clad pergolas. The interior of the church is simply beautiful in its proportions and details. We notice the three fine sedilia and a piscina with a bracket shelf. Altars must have stood in each of the transepts, as piscinas remain there. Near the high altar is a double aumbry with original wood lining. The font is of the same date as the church, and it is a good example of Decorated work. Some old glass happily remains.

The tombs and monuments are very interesting and the church is renowned for its brass memorials. Along the whole end of the north transept lies the double tomb of the founder and his wife, under a groined canopy with elaborate hanging tracery, and separated by a large foliated niche. In the same transept is the brass of their daughter, Lady Margaret Pennebrygg, who died in 1401. She is represented in a widow's gown with her head resting on a cushion, and beneath are the remains of a Norman-French inscription. Nearer the tomb is the brass of Richard Gyll, "Sergeant of the Bake-house of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and Bailly of the VII Hundred of Cokam and Bray." He died in 1511. But the finest brass, now in the centre of the nave, though formerly in the chancel, consists of the two figures of a priest and franklin under a double canopy, of about the date 1380. The priest wears the stole, maniple and alb, and his companion has a tunic and sword. It has been conjectured that these figures represent the first warden of the college and his brother. Another remarkable monument is of a later warden, William Throckmorom (1535), of whom a miniature stone effigy dressed in doctors' robes lies enclosed in an alabaster coffin. Lastly there is a brass to Thomas Noke and his three wives, of the date 1567. He is thus described: "For his great age and virtuous life he was revered by all men, and commonly





Shottesbrook House.

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called Father Noke. He was of stature high and comely, and for his excellencie in artillerie made yoman of the Crowne of England." In the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth we had a learned Berkshire lady who devoted herself to the writing of epitaphs, preferably in the Latin tongue. This was Lady Hoby, whose beautiful home, Bisham Abbey, we shall visit presently. I will not trouble you with this lady's learned effusion, but you may notice that the sex of the children on the brass does not accord with the number of each given in the inscription. The tomb-makers of the day used to keep in stock these brass strings of children, and were accustomed to cut off a sufficient number of boys or girls to suit each customer, and sometimes they got a little mixed. This may account for the discrepancy.

With regret we leave this charming and delightful church and stroll along the drive which leads by a few steps to the manor house. Shottesbrook House was built in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and looks more modern than it really is, on account of its somewhat drastic restoration in the eighteenth century, when the rooms were re-decorated, sash windows substituted for the old mullioned windows and other alterations made. In the last century it was Gothicized by the addition of a stucco embattled parapet, hood-moulds over the windows, a Gothic portico at the entrance and a loggia towards the garden. Originally it was in the form of the letter H, but had been much altered and its plan much disguised. There is a very fine eighteenth-century principal staircase, a fine hall and drawing-room lighted by large bay windows of the same period, and an elaborate plaster ceiling and carved doorway of that date. The fireplace shows good carving of the Grinling Gibbons type: This house recalls many memories of interesting personages, some of whom in the eighteenth century reached to historic fame. At the time of the Domesday Survey it was held by Alward the Goldsmith, and the Pipe roll of 1166 calls it *Sotesbroch auri*

fabrorum. The manor was held by the serjeanty of furnishing charcoal to the King's goldsmith for the making of the King's crown and regalia. Twenty years later military service of forty days and a payment of 20s. to the Wardship of Windsor Castle was substituted for this, and in 1339 the Lord of the Manor had instead to present a pair of gilt spurs. In 1186 the Crown granted it to Hugh de Shottesbrook, whose family held it in the male line till 1296, when it passed by marriage to William Vis de Lon, then to John de Oxonia, and in 1335 to William Trussel, the King's yeoman, who founded the college at Shottesbrook and built the present church. His son John predeceased him : so the estate passed to his daughter Margaret Trussel, who married Fulk de Pennebrigg. In 1510 it passed to John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, then to "Father Noke, and then to the family of Powle. Henry Powle was Sheriff of Berks in 1632, and protested against the payment of Ship-money. His son Richard was M.P. for Berks in the Long Parliament, and had a brother Henry who became Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of the Rolls. He was a collector of valuable MSS., which form the nucleus of the Lansdown collection in the British Museum. In 1698 the Manor was bought by William Cherry, who was a descendant of the De Chéries of Picardy and Normandy, Lords of Beareval, Liguïère and Villen court. A branch of his family settled in England at an early period. His son Francis Cherry was remarkable for his piety, learning and strong Jacobite and non-juring proclivities. He was a thorough country gentleman, a lover of manly sports, a bold rider and elegant dancer, a man of culture and a collector of manuscripts. The story is told of how he hunted with William III and set his horse at a difficult jump, in the hope that the King would follow and break his neck. This is probably apocryphal, as it was totally opposed to Mr. Cherry's character. Here at Shottesbrook he entertained many distressed nonjurors, and could provide seventy beds for their

accommodation. Among those who stayed with him were Dr. Dodwell, Robert Nelson, Thomas Ken and Charles Leslie, an outlaw who lay hidden for months disguised as a soldier. Mr. Cherry did not favour the accession of Queen Anne to the throne and avoided her in the hunting field. But the Queen, who knew his principles, was not offended, liked him very much, sent him presents of wine, and said "he was one of the honestest gentlemen in my dominions."

In 1716, Shottesbrook was sold to Mr. Robert Vansittart, son of Peter Van Sittart, a native of Dantzic and of a noble German family, who settled in London in the time of Charles II. He was the founder of the well-known and distinguished Berkshire family. Robert Vansittart was a Director of the Hon. East Indian Company, Governor of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and Christ's Hospital, a great art connoisseur, and formed a fine gallery of paintings of old masters and a splendid library which he removed to Shottesbrooke from his town house in Soho Square. His son, Arthur Vansittart, M.P. for Berks, succeeded in 1757, and was followed by his son Arthur, Colonel of the Berks Militia and M.P. for Windsor. His son Arthur succeeded in 1829, and was followed by his son, Capt. Coloraine Vansittart. On his death in 1886 the property descended to his sister, Rose Sophia, wife of Mr. Oswald A. Smith, and is now held by her son, Mr. Basil Guy Oswald Smith.

The house contains many interesting and valuable paintings, including works by Titian, Woulvemans, Van de Velch, Veronese, Morone, Houthorst, Rosa di Tivoli, Salvator Rosa, Claude and others. The most notable are "The Fortune Teller," a large canvas by Houthorst; portraits of Charles I with Queen Henrietta Maria, and General Monk by Van Dyck, the "Monkey Barber" and the "Monkey Regiment" by Teniers and of an Abbess and of Marie and Catherine de Medecis by Sustermann. There are several family portraits of interest, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Varsittart by Schalken, Lady

Palk by Reynolds, Arthur, Robert, and Henry Vansittart by Hogarth, a delightful miniature of Miss Charlotte Vansittart by Cosway and many others.

About three-quarters of a mile distant from Shottesbrook is White Waltham. The church has suffered much from over-restoration, but retains some of the old Norman work, viz., one of the tower arches, and parts of a doorway, a good Early English double piscina in the chancel and a window in the north transept of the same period. Mercifully the restorers spared also some of the old window frames, and on these pious folk some 300 years ago have scratched dates and votive crosses, and one window is inscribed with the words, "Miserere I.H.S." This church and parish are ever associated with the memory of Thomas Herne, our distinguished Berkshire antiquary, who was born here in 1678 and spent thirty-four years of his life working at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He edited Spilman's *Life of Alfred the Great*, Leland's *Itinerary*, Camden's *Annals* and Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, and wrote his valuable *Reliquiæ Hoarnianæ*. He was an uncompromising and strong non-juror, refusing to take the oath of allegiance to King William III.

His father was parish clerk and kept a writing school at White Waltham, but could not afford to give him a good liberal education, so the poor boy went as a day labourer. However, Mr. Francis Cherry rescued the boy from a life of toil and sent him to the free school at Bray to learn Latin. He went to Oxford, became assistant keeper of the Bodleian Library and spent his days there, refusing many posts as "preferring a good conscience before all manner of preferment and worldly honour." The memory of such a man should not be forgotten in his native place and county.

There is much to record about this parish of White Waltham. Several manors have been held by important families. Herne left many notes concerning the history of the place which the curious reader will find in his edition of the fifth volume of

Leland's *Itinerary*. One of the manor houses, now a farm, is moated, and Hearne states that it was once the country house of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII. In Hearne's time it was the residence of the learned classical scholar, Henry Dodwell, Camden Professor of History at Oxford University, who died here in 1711. The parish could boast of a great early astronomer, William Neile, son of Sir Paul Neile and grandson of the Archbishop of York, gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Charles II. He fitted up an observatory here and Hearne speaks of him as a man of singular talents and particularly eminent for his skill in mathematics and philosophy. The house in which he lived, formerly known as Hill House, is now called Waltham Place. But I have not space to record half the distinguished folk connected with the parish; though I must mention Hearne's story of a former vicar, John Blower, who was called upon to preach before the imperious Queen Elizabeth. He was very nervous at the ordeal. First he addressed her "my Royal Queen," and then a little later, "my Noble Queen," whereat her majesty was heard to observe, "What! am I ten groats worse than I was?" The pun being overheard by the preacher, he was so disconcerted that he resolved never to preach another sermon, and for the future always substituted one of the Homilies.

Just outside the church wall the old stocks and whipping post remain, memorials of old-time punishments. The place was formerly known as Waltham Abbots, the great tithes having been appropriated to the Abbey of Chertsey and then given to Bisham Abbey.

Travelling two miles from White Waltham we are on Maidenhead Thicket, a famous ground for highwaymen and footpads. Stretches of beautiful common covered with gorse extend on each side the road. It was a tract so infested by robbers that as early as 1255 an order was issued for widening the road between Maidenhead Bridge and Henley-on-Thames, by removing the trees and brushwood on each

side. The district was so notorious for the number of depredations that in Elizabeth's time an Act was passed for "enlarging the statutes for following Hue and Cry," whereby the hundred of Beynhurst, in which the thicket stands, was specially exempted from penalties when there had been no voluntary default. In former times the inhabitants of a hundred were held responsible for damages and felonious deeds wrought within its borders ; but these deeds of violence were so frequent on the thicket that the people were terribly oppressed by fines ; and hence were relieved by this Act. A legend has also grown up that the vicar of Hurley, who served the cure of Maidenhead, was allowed an extra salary for the danger of passing the thicket. Colonel Cooper King, in his *History of Berkshire* adds, "the robbers were no respecters of persons, and like Robin Hood, robbed a fat priest as well as a lean layman." It is undoubtedly a myth as regards the vicar of Hurley in Elizabethan times, as Maidenhead then provided its own chaplain ; but it is true that in 1352 an arrangement was made with the prior and convents of Hurley to provide a chaplain who was to be a secular priest and not a monk ; but that pending the appointment the services should be taken by one of the monks. That the thicket was a sufficiently dangerous locality, Leland shows in his account of his journey from Maidenhead to Twyford. For two miles the road was narrow and woody, dangerous enough ; then came the Great Frith three miles long ; altogether a wood infested with robbers five miles in extent. "And then," he says, "to Twyford, a praty tounlet a two miles." Twyford was undoubtedly a charming spot to reach after a route so long, tedious and dangerous.

We are now on the old Bath Road, and a very good road it is. Strings of coaches used to drive along it, and you can still see the pumps by the roadside, by means of which the road was watered to lay the dust. It is now covered with tarmac ; but before that useful operation I have cycled along

it when it was two or three inches deep in dust. But the road was even far worse before the days of MacAdam. About the year 1670 you could have seen the notices of the wonderful "Flying Machine" which travelled from London to Bath, starting from the "Bell Savage" on Ludgate Hill, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, performing "the whole journey in three days (if God permit)." The roads were then called roads by courtesy. Coaches were often upset, and belied their reputation of "flying." In winter they were sometimes eight inches deep in fluid sludge in the only available track which was only six feet wide, while the rest was one mass of deep adhesive mud. Snowstorms came sometimes, and our Bath coach was in 1668 enveloped in a snowdrift and required four great cart horses to drag it out again. Fogs, too, which impeded traffic. In 1840 the coaches were escorted by torch-light, and contrived to travel nine miles in three hours.

So musing on the discomforts of our ancestors, and not pining very much for the vanished glories of the road and the humours of coaching days and coaching ways, we pass on to Maidenhead, a pleasant river-side town which every one knows, though few seem to know its history.

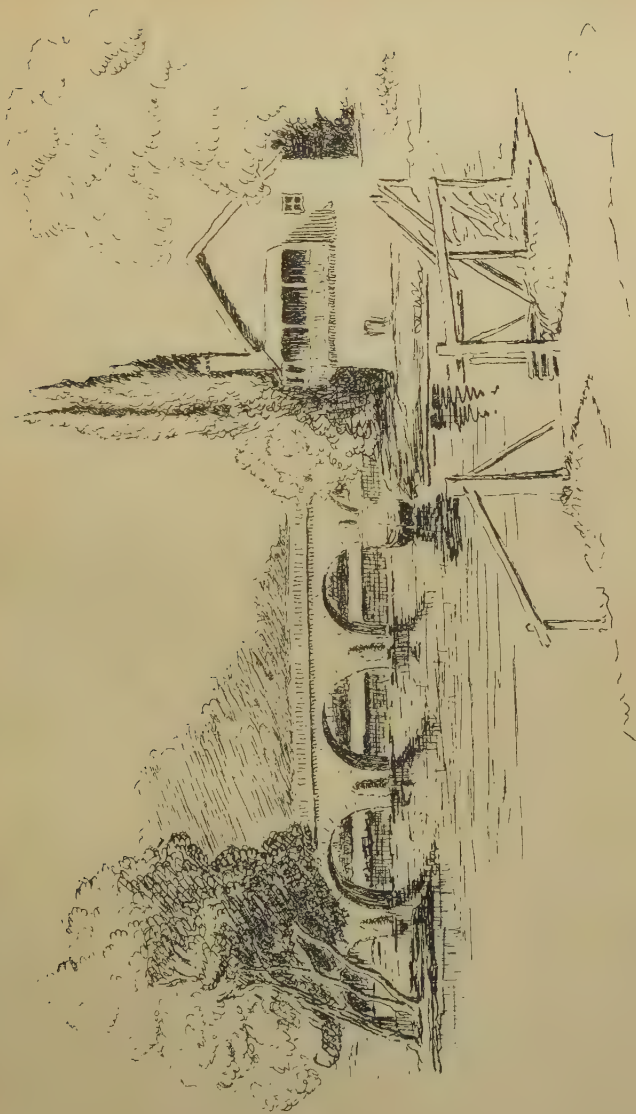
VI

Maidenhead and Bray

WE are told that Maidenhead cannot boast of a long or stirring history, and that it is but a child of its older neighbours, Cookham, Bray and Taplow. If so, it is a somewhat sturdy infant, and has thriven amazingly in recent years.

It is situated in the Hundred of Bray, and was in early times known as South Elington. Leland states that the town of Maidenhead "standeth a pretty distance from the Thames side and is mostly well-built." The south side of the town is in the parish of Bray; the north in that of Cookham. But before it began to assume a separate entity and blossomed out into a fair town, having a corporation of its own, it may be well to try to discover traces of the various peoples who have here made their homes, and have left evidences of their presence in the shape of tools, weapons, earth-works or buildings.

Of the presence of pre-historic races there is no lack of evidence. A very large number of flint axes, lance-heads, arrow-heads, scrapers and flakes, have been found in the neighbourhood, and also numerous implements of bronze. At Hedsor, a few years ago, the remains of a pile dwelling were discovered, and doubtless there were many others on the wide lagoon which spread its placid waves from Castle Hill to the foot of Taplow Hill. Pit-dwellings have been found on Maidenhead Thicket and at Hircham, where Mr. Rutland saw several circles containing food vessels, drinking



Maidenhead Bridge

cups, cinerary urns and bones of domestic animals. A bronze sickle has been found at Bray. At Amerden, four fine bronze leaf-shaped swords, bronze celts, rapier, knife, sheath, have been dredged from the river, and also a valuable specimen of an iron sword in a bronze sheath. Several swords have been dredged from the Thames at Maidenhead bridge, evidences of early combats which were fought long before, or just before, the dawn of history. In Celtic times, before the advent of the Romans, this county was inhabited by the Bibroci, who were subdued by the Romans, and were among the first of the Celtic tribes to lay down their arms at the feet of the Conqueror. The earthworks on Maidenhead Thicket, near the pit dwellings to which I have already alluded, are evidences of their struggle with the power of Rome. They consist of a bold embankment about five feet high, ten feet in diameter, and eighty yards long. Its form is curved and it is evidently the remains of a circular fort, and undoubtedly of British origin. On the opposite side of the Thicket is a large quadrangular entrenchment of Roman origin. Robin Hood's arbour, a smaller earthwork, is evidently a kind of outpost to the principal encampment. The existence of these Celtic and Roman earthworks side by side is evidence of the struggle between the two nations, and tells us plainer than words that the Bibroci did not give up their liberties and hearths and homes without a good fight. There are many evidences of the presence of the all-conquering Romans at Maidenhead. Leland states that it was the Roman city of *Alauno dunum*, but where he got his information no man knoweth. As far as I am aware, the name does not occur in any of the Roman Itineraries. But whether or not there ever was such a town, Maidenhead was an important place in Roman times. There is first the evidence of roads. A Roman road ran from Braywick to Cockmarsh in Cookham, through Staverton Lodge, where coins have been found. The house stands on the road. The roads passed through the

town; I believe St. Luke's church stands upon it; Mr. Rutland has traced its course, and Mr. Kerry, in his *Hundred of Bray*, describes it. I have never traversed it, but am told that its course is very clearly defined in several places.

Tumuli are often found in the vicinity of Roman roads. There are two at Cockmarsh, one of which has been opened, and Mr. Cocks, of Marlow, found therein the umbo of a shield, with burnt earth pottery and other remains. Antiquaries have been very busy with their spades and have dug in a fruitful soil. Near the residence of our Member of Parliament, Mr. Gardner, at Spencer's, there is an earthwork, a raised plateau fortified by ditches and vallum, and our Member is the fortunate possessor of a fine first brass coin of Antoninus, found near this spot. Bray abounds in old Roman coins. But the most striking discovery of the settlement of the Conquerors is that of the Roman villa at the Firs, Castle Hill, the residence of Mr. Silver. Excavations were made in 1886 under the careful conduct of Mr. Rutland, who found a large and important house, with hypocausts for heating the chambers, a complete bath, and all the arrangements of comfort and luxury with which the prosperous and luxurious Roman loved to surround himself. Coins, Samian ware, amphoræ, dishes, vases, cooking, food, and drinking-vessels galore, he had left behind him for Mr. Rutland to discover. A Roman quern, or hand corn mill, was found near. Several pieces of plaster with remains of mural decorations were discovered.

Of Saxon times there is not so much evidence, though the name Elington seems to show that there was a Saxon Settlement here, and across the river at Taplow Mr. Rutland found one of the finest Saxon tumuli which have ever been discovered in England. The contents of this tumulus are deposited in the British Museum, and forms one of the most attractive exhibits in the Anglo-Saxon section.

The name South Elington (the ton, town or fortified settlement of the family or followers of El) survived until 1296.

(By the way, the place did not derive its name from the family of Elynden as some suppose, but the family from the place.) After that date the name Maidenhuth came into use, in various forms, such as Maidenheith, Maydenhead. The explanation of its meaning is not simple. Heith or hyth signifies a wharf, and according to Isaac Taylor, Maidenhythe or Middenhithe signifies the midway wharf between Marlow and Windsor. Professor Skeat laughs at this explanation and contends that it means a "landing-place for maidens," a place where landing from a boat was very easily accomplished. Edmund, in his *Names of Places*, conjectures (somewhat improbably) that it was connected with the Maid, the Virgin Mary, and Leland says it derived its name from the head of one of the eleven thousand virgins who accompanied St. Ursula and were slaughtered by the Pagans at Cologne. I need hardly say that Maidenhead in Berkshire has no connexion with that legend.

The birth of Maidenhead may be attributed to the building of the bridge. Previous to its erection the nearest crossing of the Thames was by a ferry at Balham, and the great western road to Reading, Gloucester and Bristol went through Cookham. After the building of the bridge the traffic was diverted from Burnham and Cookham and caused Maidenhead to increase in prosperity and importance. Camden says that after the town "had built here a bridge upon piles it began to have inns, and to be so frequented as to out-vic its neighbouring mother, Bray, a much more ancient place." The first bridge was built about 1280, so that it can claim a long history. Camden says it was built in 1460, but this is evidently an error, as in 1297 (Pat. Rolls, Edw. I), a grant was made for its repair. These are the words:—"Grant at the instance of Will. de Berford in aid of the bridge of Maidenhead which is almost broken down, of pontage (tolls) for 3 years, to be taken by the hands of 2 good and lawful men appointed by him." In 1335 there was a grant made

to the bailiffs and good men of Maidenhead of pontage for three years on wares passing under or over the bridge of their town. Some years later the good citizens of London complained of the exorbitant tolls for the passing of Maidenhead bridge.

As was not unusual in medieval times a chapel was connected with the bridge. Old bridges were rather perilous structures, and travellers would often wish to pray for a safe passage, or to give thanks for their secure crossing. This chapel was originally built by the family of Hosebund about 1270. In 1304, one Theobald de Thingden was presented to the Church of Elyndon, void by the resignation of Robert de Harvedon, the presentation being in the hands of the King by reason of the voidance of the see of Winchester. In 1352, John Hosebund, citizen and corn-dealer of London, left money for the endowment of a chantry, for one priest in the chapel of St. Andrew and St. Mary Magdalene to pray year by year for the souls of himself, and of Richd. Bride and Margery his wife. An arrangement was made with the Prior and Convent of Hurley to find and maintain this chaplain. The chapel was taken down and rebuilt in 1724, but on account of the obstruction it occasioned to the great western road it was again taken down and rebuilt in 1824.

In the time of Henry VI the bridge was in a very ruinous condition, and the liege subjects of the King preferred crossing by the ferry; and *The Guild of St. Andrew and St. Mary Magdalene* was formed in 1452 for the repair and maintenance of the bridge. Thomas Mettingham, Priest of the Chantry, to which I have alluded, petitioned King Henry VI to grant his license for the establishment of a Guild in the chapel, to be called "The overseers, wardens, brothers and sisters of the Fraternity or Guild of St. Andrew and St. Mary Magdalene of Maidenheath." The duties of the guild were to maintain the chantry and find wax lights for it, and to repair the bridge. They were to have a common seal, and take toll

for the repair of the bridge. This Guild was the ancestor of the present Corporation. It shared the fate of other similar institutions at the time of the Reformation, on the ground of its superstitious usages, and was dissolved in 1547. It was revived thirty years later, and in 1581 Queen Elizabeth granted to the town a Charter of Incorporation. The governing body succeeded to all the duties of the ancient guild, except that all religious obligations with regard to the Chapel were abandoned, and it consisted of one warden, two bridge-masters, and eight burgesses. The second Charter was obtained from James I in 1604, the third was granted by Charles II in 1663, the fourth by James II in 1685, when the warden was superseded by the Mayor. The present constitution was framed in accordance with the Municipal Reform Act of 1836. The old Guildhall being in a ruinous condition was pulled down in 1777, and a new one erected, when Abraham Darby was Mayor, and James Payn, Town Clerk, at a cost of £1,330.

The Corporation Seal is curious. It is evidently the seal of a foreign ecclesiastic (so states the late Sir Wolleston Franks) and has nothing to do with Maidenhead. The inscription is *Sigillum Iohannis Godayn Canonici Thiernensis* (the seal of John Godayn, Canon of Thiers). How it came to be used as the official seal of Maidenhead no man knoweth. The old Town Mace, too, is interesting. It dates, I believe, from the time of Charles II. It was at one time lost, or stolen, and then discovered in a broken condition; it has been skilfully repaired.

Certain historical associations are connected with the bridge. When Henry IV had won his crown by the right of his trusty sword, certain noblemen, followers of Richard II, raised an insurrection against him. Amongst them were the Earls of Rutland, Kent and Huntingdon, and Lord Spencer. They assembled an army of about 40,000 men and tried to catch the King at Windsor; but he had received

warning of their purpose and retired on London, where he raised an army. The conspirators retreated. The Earl of Kent fell back on Maidenhead and held the bridge until all the army had safely crossed. For three days he defended Maidenhead, and was at length obliged to retreat on the arrival of the King. We need not follow the fate of these luckless conspirators, who were all executed with the barbarities usual in that age.

Again the bridge appears in the page of history. It was fortified in 1688 to impede the approach of the Prince of Orange who was marching on London, and was held by an Irish regiment. But the people of Maidenhead were ever inspired by a playful humour. In the dead of night they beat a Dutch march, which so alarmed the Irish soldiers that they took to their heels and left their guns and cannon behind them. The last chapter of the eventful history of the bridge was written in 1772, when the present magnificent stone structure was erected from designs by Sir Robert Taylor at a cost of £19,000, a finely written account of which may be seen in the muniments of the Corporation. The railway bridge was designed by the celebrated Sir Isambard Brunel.

One other historical event connected with the town must be recorded. At the old "Greyhound Inn" in 1647 Charles I was allowed by his Roundhead captors to meet his children. The town was strewn with flowers and decked with green boughs, showing the loyalty of the people of Maidenhead to the falling throne. The children dined with him, and drove to Caversham where the King was held a prisoner at Caversham Park.

There is little of interest in modern Maidenhead to attract the attention of the lover of old buildings. Some old almshouses on the road to the river were erected in 1653. The town is very liable to floods, and on the wall a stone marks the height to which the river rose in the great floods of 1894.

All the churches are modern. But those who love the river know well the town's attractions, and the charms of that fine reach within sight of the Cliveden Woods or Burnham Beeches, though their delights may be dimmed by the scramble through the famous and fashionable Boulter's Lock.

Lately the town has suffered from the advent of aliens from London, anxious to escape from the terror of air-raids. Like locusts they have descended upon the town, and devoured all the fat of the land and ate the fruits of the ground.

If you take the road beneath the railway arch near the station, a short journey of a little more than a mile brings you to Maidenhead's mother, Bray, a much older place and far more interesting. It has an ancient church. Indeed there was one in the time of the Domesday Survey, of which one Reinbald was priest; but this has entirely been superseded by an Early English structure erected in 1293. This has been far too vigorously restored, but the portions of that church remaining are the nave arches with part of the chancel—the old chancel arch was removed in 1859—the west end including the nave door, the north wall as far as the chapel of St. Nicholas and the basement of the upper chancel with the piscina. In the fifteenth century some windows were inserted and the tower built in 1400. The upper part of the upper chancel and the chapel of All Saints at the east end of the south aisle were erected about 1520, the latter having a screen and an altar in front of it, as the piscina remains. The chapel of St. Nicholas at the east end of the north aisle was in existence in 1467 when good John Norreys left some money in his Will for re-edifying it, and for the purchase of ornaments and the providing of a light to be kept burning before the altar (and also for lights before the rood, St. Stephen's and in Our Lady's chapel), but it seems to have been reconstructed a century later. The church had some interesting mural paintings, but all have vanished, as well as the rood screen. The font was erected in 1647 when it was

recorded in the Churchwarden's Accounts Book that there was

	£	s.	d.
Payd to Mr. Winch, of Fifield, for the new Phaunt	1	12	3
Payd to Waul, the Joyner, for carrying home the Phaunt to his howse	0	0	6
Payd more to Waule, for the cover of the Phaunt, and the pillar, and for carving, painting, gyldeing, setting up the same Phaunt	2	2	0
	£3	14	9

"Phaunt" is a curious mode of spelling the word, and either Waule or Winch must have been a Freemason, judging from certain signs I detected on this font. The Royal Arms were happily saved when the screen was destroyed, and in the vestry is preserved a chained copy of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, but alas! visiting vandals have torn away and carried off very many of its pages.

Some of the mortuary verses are curious. These lines grace that of William Goddard, who founded Jesus Hospital, which we shall visit presently:

If what I was thou seekest to know,
 These lynes my character shall shew,
 Those benefits that God me lent,
 With thanks I tooke, and freely spent:
 I scorned what plainness could not gett,
 And, next to treason, hated debt;
 I loved not those who stirr'd up strife:
 True to my friend and to my wife.
 The latter here by me I have,
 We had one bed, and have one grave.
 My honesty was such that I,
 When death came, feared not to dye.

The following tribute to a husband's memory is worth quoting:

When Oxford gave thee two degrees in art,
 And love possest thee master of my heart,
 Thy college fellowship thou lef'st for mine
 And novght bvt deathe could seprate me frō thine.

Thirty-five yeares we livd'e in wedlocke bands
 Conjoynd in ovr hearts as well as handes ;
 Bvt death the bodies of best friendes devides,
 And in the earths close wombe their relyckes hides ;
 Yet here they are not lost but sowen, that they
 May rise more gloriovs at the Judgment day.

There is a fine black marble slab to the memory of William Norris or Norreys, usher of the Parliament House and of the noble Order of the Garter, gentleman pensioner, controller of the Works of Windsor Castle and Parks, Keeper of Follijohn Park during the reigns of Queens Mary and Elizabeth. The members of this family were great people on this side the forest, as the Nevilles were in the neighbourhood of Wokingham. We shall visit their home presently.

Punning on tombstones is a habit our ancestors could not resist. When a man named Little died his friends seized the opportunity at once :

Although thou called were but Littill by thy name,
 In with thy mind and Godlyness full great yet was in fame,
 Yet where thou wast before but great, through Virtue sewre
 Thou greater now, doest rest in heaven, for ever to endure.

This Thomas Little was a man of good family and held a large estate in Bray.

There are several brasses in the church, viz., a fine brass of Sir John Foxley with two wives (1378) ; William Dyer, vicar, 1440 ; Sir William Laken, 1475 ; Clement Kelke, 1593 ; William Smith, 1594 ; Thomas At Lude ; Cicely and Arthur Page, 1610, and the desk-kneller brass of a lady member of the Rixman family, whose tribute to her husband's memory, a former fellow of his college, I have already recorded.

During the restoration in 1860 two important medieval monuments were discovered :

1. A large slab of Purbeck marble with the inscription :

IHAN : HEReward : GIST : ICI : DIEV :
 DE : SA : ALME : EYT : MERCE : AMEN ✠

2. A thirteenth century coffin lid inscribed :

ICI : GIST : WILLAME : LE : FIZ : SA[CH]ARI :
 LESSCOLER : JE : STANE ✠
 (Meaning the Scholar of Staines.)

Some other coffin lids of stone bearing crosses and the matrix of a fine brass.

In the churchyard is an old chantry chapel, which William Cherry, brother of Mr. Francis Cherry, of Shottesbrook, converted into a school, and it was there Hearne was educated and learnt his letters and Latin. The Worshipful Company of Fishmongers gave some land for its benefit in 1848, but the requirements of the Education Department have necessitated its abandonment and the erection of a new school.

In the churchyard stands a curious old lichgate which I believe to be unique. It has two dwellings over it, and was erected in 1448, according to the original date in quaint arabic numbers inscribed on one of its timbers.

The village will be associated in the minds of most readers with the turncoat vicar, whom Fuller describes as living in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, "first a Papist, then a Protestant, then a Papist, and then Protestant again. He had seen some martyrs burnt at Windsor, and found this fire too hot for his tender temper. This vicar being taxed by one with being a turncoat and an unconstant changeling : 'Not so,' said he, 'for I have always kept my principle, which is this, to live and die the Vicar of Bray.' Such many, nowadays, who, though they cannot turn the wind, turn their mills, and set them so that wheresoever it bloweth their grist shall certainly be grinded." This vicar was Simon Dillon or D'Aleyn, but the author of the celebrated song, an officer in Colonel Fuller's regiment in the time of George I, incorrectly transferred the versatile vicar to the days of Charles II, James II, William III, Anne and George I, and sang :

In good King Charles's golden days,
 When loyalty had no harm in't,
 A zealous High Churchman I was,
 And so I got preferment.
 To teach my flock I never miss'd
 Kings were by God appointed,
 And they are damned who dare resist,
 Or touch the Lord's anointed.

Chorus : And this is law I will maintain,
 Until my dying day, sir,
 That whatsoever King shall reign
 I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir.

When Royal James obtained the throne,
 And Popery grew in fashion,
 The penal laws I hooted down,
 And read the Declaration ;
 The Church of Rome I found would fit
 Full well my constitution ;
 And I had been a Jesuit,
 But for the Revolution.

And so on through all the changes of that changing time—
 a Tory in good Queen Anne's time, a Whig when George in
 pudding-time came o'er—

For in my faith and loyalty
 I never once will falter.
 But George my King shall ever be—
 Except the times do alter.

In the parish stands a beautiful old hospital or almshouse, called Jesus Hospital, founded in 1616, under the will of William Goddard, who placed it under the management of the Fishmongers' Company of London. He directed that there should be built rooms with chimneys, fit and convenient for forty poor people to dwell and inhabit it, and that there should be one chapel or place convenient to serve Almighty God in for ever with public and divine prayers and other exercises of religion, and also one kitchen and bakehouse common to all the people in the said hospital. Jesus Hospital is a quadrangular building, containing forty almshouses surrounding a court, which is divided into gardens, one of

which is attached to each house. It has a pleasing entrance through a gabled brick porch, which has over the Tudor-shaped doorway a statue of the founder, and mullioned latticed windows. The old people live happy and contented lives, and find in the eventide of their existence a cheerful home in peaceful and beautiful surroundings.

In the parish of Bray there are several manors and manor houses. A principal one is Philiberts, named after Hugh de St. Philibert who in 1272 held two miles of land by the service of providing the king with a bushel of wine. The present manor house is at least the third mansion on the same site. The ancient moated residence was taken down about the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the old gabled half-timbered house, with its twisted chimneys and spacious bayed windows, was erected. This gave place to the present house at the end of the eighteenth century. It was later a prosperous Preparatory school, with an excellent cricket ground. Bray has a considerable reputation for the noble game, and for all manly sport. On Oldfield Common in the days of Good Queen Bess archery meetings were held there, and the archers of Bray exhibited great skill in the use of the bow. On a brass in Clewer church one of these matches is commemorated thus :

He that lieth under this stone
Shott with a hundred men alone.
This is trew that I do saye,
The match was shott in Oulde Felde at Bray.
I will tell you before you go hence,
That his name was Martine Expençe.

Bray used often to play cricket against the M.C.C., and on one occasion when Bray won and the church bells rang for the victory, the Londoners were angry and refused to eat the supper provided for them. In 1797 a match was played between two English teams for 1,000 guineas and Bray won. The first foundations of Berkshire county cricket were laid

at Bray by the Austen-Leigh family, the sons of the vicar. Mr. Spencer Austen Leigh in 1858 arranged matches between the gentlemen of the shire and those of Sussex, Kent, Wilts and Hampshire, in which his family appeared in force and scored well.

To return to Philiberts, Nell Gwynn once lived in the old house, and her white marble bust was preserved for some time there. Charles II was usually accompanied in his visits to Philiberts by the profligate Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whom he generally met at an inn called the "Duke's Head" in Peascod Street, Windsor. Philiberts has been used during the war for the incarceration of German prisoners. Another house in the parish well worth inspection is the manor house of Ockwells; the owner is Sir Edward Barry, Bart.

It is goodly to look upon, a perfect example of a fifteenth-century residence with its noble hall and minstrel's gallery, its solar, kitchens, corridors, and gardens. Moreover, it is now owned by those who love and respect antiquity and its architectural beauties, and is in every respect an Old English mansion, well preserved and tenderly cared for. Yet at one time it was almost doomed to destruction. The then owner threatened to pull it down or to turn it into a tannery. Our Berks Archæological Society endeavoured to raise money for its purchase. This helped the owner to realize that the house was of some commercial value. Its destruction was stayed, and then, happily, it was purchased by the present owners who have done so much to restore its original beauties.

Ockwells was built by Sir John Norreys about the year 1466. The chapel was not completed at his death in 1467, and he left money in his will "to the full bilding and making uppe of the Chapell with the Chambres ajoyng with'n my manoir of Okholt in the p'rish of Bray aforsaid not yet finisshed XLli." This chapel was burnt down in 1778. One of the most important features of the hall is the heraldic glass, commemorating eighteen worthies, which is of the same date as

the house. The credit of identifying these worthies is due to Mr. Everard Green, Rouge Dragon, who in 1899 communicated the result of his researches to Viscount Dillon, President of the Society of Antiquaries. There are eighteen shields of arms. Two are royal and ensigned with royal crowns. Two are ensigned with mitres and fourteen with mantled helms, and of these fourteen, thirteen hold a crest. Each achievement is placed in a separate light on an ornamental background composed of quarries and alternate diagonal stripes of white glass bordered with gold, on which the motto

ffeyth-fully-serbe

is inscribed in black-letter. The quarries in each light have the same badge, namely, three golden distaffs, one in pale and two in saltire, banded with a golden and tasselled ribbon. Both motto and badge are by some assigned to the family of Norreys and by others to the Royal Wardrobe. If, however, the Norreys arms are correctly set forth in a compartment of a door-head remaining in the north wall, and also in one of the windows—namely, argent a chevron between three ravens' heads crased sable, with a beaver for dexter supporter—the second conjecture is doubtless correct.

These shields represent the arms of Sir John Norreys, the builder of Ockwells Manor House, and of his sovereign, patrons and kinsfolk. It is a *liber amicorum* in glass, a not unpleasant way for light to come to us, as Mr. Everard Green pleasantly remarks. By means of heraldry Sir John Norreys recorded his friendships, thereby adding to the pleasures of memory as well as to the splendour of his great hall. The names of his friends and patrons so recorded by their arms are: Sir Henry Beauchamp, sixth Earl of Warwick; Sir Edmund Beaufort, K.G.; Margaret of Anjou, Queen of Henry VI, "the dauntless queen of tears, who headed councils, led armies, and ruled both king and people"; Sir John de

la Pole, K.G. ; Henry VI ; Sir James Butler ; The Abbey of Abingdon ; Richard Beauchamp, Bishop of Salisbury from 1450 to 1481 ; Sir John Norreys himself ; Sir John Wenlock, of Wenlock, Shropshire ; Sir William Lacon, of Stow, Kent, buried at Bray ; the arms and crest of a member of the Moretimer family ; Sir Richard Nanfan, of Birtsmorton Court, Worcestershire ; Sir John Norreys with his arms quartered with those of Alice Merbury, of Yettendon, his first wife ; Sir John Langford, who married Sir John Norreys's granddaughter ; a member of the De la Beche family (?) ; John Purve, of Thacham, Bray and Cookham ; Richard Bulstrode, of Upton, Buckinghamshire, Keeper of the Great Wardrobe to Queen Margaret of Anjou, and afterwards Comptroller of the Household to Edward VI.

Nash gave a drawing of the house in his *Mansions of England in the Olden Time*, showing the interior of the hall, the porch and corridor, and the east front ; and from the hospitable door is issuing a crowd of gaily-dressed people in Elizabethan costume.

There is much lore connected with Bray which the late Rev. Charles Kelly collected. Judging from the number of Roman coins that have been found, it may have been a Roman station. We find here the legend common to many places that the builders of the church began to erect it on a different site near Builder's Well, but that demons every night carried off their work to the present position near the river ; and so the masons were obliged to yield to this satanic agency.

The evening shadows are falling on peaceful Bray, and it is advisable to hie us back to Maidenhead, where there are many good hostelries to rest awhile for the night, the town having been a great place for travellers in the old coaching days. At the "Greyhound" Charles I met his children after years of separation. At the "Bear" James I dined with the Vicar and Curate of Bray unbeknown to them. The story runs that the King was hunting and lost his way,

coming alone to the inn in search for a dinner. He asked the landlady what he could have for his meal.

"Nothing, sir; it is Lent, and all the fish is bespoke, and dressing for dinner for the Vicar of Bray and his curate."

"Go up to them," replied the King, "and say that there is a gentleman here who gives his humble service to them, and would be much obliged to them if they would give him leave to dine with them." The King was invited to enter the room, and the dinner passed off very pleasantly. At length the reckoning was to be called for. When it arrived the King said:

"Gentlemen, I know not what to do. I left home in haste and forgot to take any money in my pocket, and am really without a shilling."

"A pretty fellow, indeed!" quoth the Vicar, "to come and get a dinner from us in this way! No, no; you must settle it with the landlord; I'll not pay for your dinner, I promise you."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed the Curate; "do not speak thus to the gentleman; I'll pay his reckoning, and think myself well repaid by his entertaining conversation."

The King thanked the Curate, and said he would repay him. The conversation was scarcely over, when a great noise was heard in the inn yard; horns blowing, lords, gentlemen, yeomen, springing from their horses and shouting, "Has anything been heard of His Majesty? Has he passed through here?"

His Majesty opened the balcony door and presented himself. Instantly there were a hundred bent knees. The poor Vicar then bent his knee and begged pardon:

"I did not know it was your Majesty, or . . ." he managed to stammer.

"O, mon, I forgive you," replied the King; "you shall be Vicar of Bray still, I promise you." Then turning to

his friend the Curate, he added : " And as there is a Canonry of Windsor now vacant, you, mon, shall have it.

Some Maidenhead hostelries have a long history. The " Bull " was in existence in 1459, when William Mordall was presented for taking exorbitant gain, which charge was levied against another occupant, Alice Buckland, thirty years later. It seems to have been a characteristic of these early proprietors to take excessive, a weakness that perhaps their modern representatives have not quite lost, especially during the boating season. Richard Hithe of the " Swan " in 1489 did the same. The " White Horse " was in existence in 1600. Some lines were addressed to the landlord of the " Orkney Arms " in 1735, and appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. They are as follows :

Friend Isaac, 'tis strange you that live so near Bray,
Should not set up the sign of " THE VICAR " ;
Though it may be an odd one, you cannot but say
It must needs be a sign of good liquor.

To this a reply was made :

Indeed, master poet, your reason's but poor,
For the vicar would think it a sin,
To stay like a booby, and lounge at the door :
'Twere a sign 'twas bad liquor within.

VII

From Maidenhead to Henley-on-Thames

A PLEASING diversity in our methods of travel may be made by taking a boat at Maidenhead and traversing the old Berkshire highway, the river Thames. In summer the excursion can be made by the Thames steamboats which allow of landing at any lock and at frequent points elsewhere. In olden days before railways were invented and the system of canals extended, the Thames was the principal means for transit of goods and the great highway of traffic. In 1205 King John gave licence to William FitzAndrew to have one vessel to ply on the river between Oxford and London, without any impediment to him or his men on the part of the bailiffs of Wallingford and Windsor, and all through time following the Thames has been thus used. In the time of Henry VIII both persons and goods were usually conveyed by boat from Windsor to London. "The quality" travelled by barges, their servants and goods by boat.

The Thames was not then the placid stream that affords delight to oarsmen. It was not locked, bolted and barred as it is to-day. The dangers in winter, in times of flood and storm, were very serious, as the records of the Sessions of our county show. There used to be constant wrecks, and Dr. Plot tells us that in summer "in dry times barges do sometimes lie aground three weeks or a month or more." The system of "flashing" was used in the seventeenth century, stanches being placed at the shallow spots, which penned up

the river, and when suddenly removed the barges were floated by the sudden rush of the water over the shallows below. The process of working the boats up stream over the shallows was very difficult, as they had to be laboriously hauled up with the aid of a capstan on the bank. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that pound locks were devised, and the river converted into an obedient and less turbulent stream.

Anticipating no such dangers to-day we embark on our voyage. It is pleasant sailing. The sky is clear and the river beautiful. On the right are the lovely woods of Cliefden,

The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and Love.

This was the home of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who killed the Earl of Shrewsbury in a duel, while the Countess in page attire held her paramour's horse. There is much to tell about the house, and it never looked more beautiful than on the occasion of a garden party at the house where Mr. Astor lives, whose father added much to its enrichment. It has been rebuilt, burnt down, rebuilt again. Princes, Dukes and Earls have lived there, and "Rule Britannia" was born there. It runs along the summit of a lofty slope. The hanging woods present a scene of rare beauty, and along the whole river it would be difficult to find a more charming and picturesque landscape than this.

We glide placidly up stream and notice Hedsor (Bucks), where some ancient pile-dwellings were discovered in 1894. Here again there is a fine park with charming views surrounding Lord Boston's mansion. The original house was not very beautiful and was designed by George III for the first Lord Boston, who was equerry to Frederick Prince of Wales in 1778. Happily it has been rebuilt. The small church in the grounds is not remarkable. The river makes a sharp curve here and lands us at Cookham on the Berkshire bank. A thick volume by the late Mr. Stephen Darby (privately

printed) and a long and interesting paper by Sir George Young on the church exists. The village nestles under the hanging woods of Hedsor and Cliefden, which clothe the most southerly outlying spur of the Chilterns. Mr. Darby thought that the original settlement was situate farther away from the river on the high ground near the present railway station, and that this was destroyed by the Danes who formed another settlement. There is an island-track of land adjoining the present village bearing the name Odney or Odin's Ey (islet), but this derivation can scarcely be proved, and Odney may have been derived from a Saxon named Ode or Odda, and as far as we know the Danes never settled here. The townlet has many attractive-looking Queen Anne houses and half-timbered tile-roofed cottages, but its old-world character has been lost in modern times, the motor-horn is heard continually in its streets, and crowds of excursionists from London invade this once retired village. Close to the river stands the church, which formerly belonged to the Abbey of Cirencester. It therefore forms a connecting link between this and a later part of our wanderings. An earlier church was here in Saxon times. The present building consists of a chancel which the late Mr. Gordon Hills believed to be part of the original Saxon church and to have been erected prior to 1041, with the Lady Chapel on the north side and St. Clement's on the south, a nave with St. Catherine's Chapel on the north and a south aisle and a Perpendicular tower. The north wall and windows are Norman and the north archway and original walling of the Lady Chapel Transitional. Most of the arcade, St. Catherine's Chapel and the south wall are Early English. St. Clement's Chapel was added in the Decorated period, and some minor alterations made in the Perpendicular period, and the building of the tower. The church has many interesting monuments and brasses, some of them mutilated. There is an altar tomb and a brass to the memory of Robert Pecke, "Master clerk of the spycery under K. Harry the Sixth" and

Annes his wife (1410), with a figure of the Blessed Trinity above. There are two brasses to members of the Babham family, 1458 and 1527; another to William Andrew and John Monkeden and Margaret their wife, 1503, and another to a child of the seventeenth century, besides portions of others. There is also a palimpsest brass to Raffé More and his wife, 1572, and on the reverse side of a Flemish brass of the late fourteenth century. The church has some very interesting medieval encaustic tiles. Cookham has had some notable inhabitants whose names have found their way into the *National Dictionary of Biography*. Amongst these is Nathaniel Hooke, the lifelong friend of Pope, and author of the *History of Rome*, in four volumes, and other important works. He helped the Duchess of Marlborough to write her memoirs, and was the friend of Mrs. Montague, Queen of the Blue-stockings, who mentions him in one of her letters. The Rev. George Berkeley, vicar (1769-1793), his wife and son are honourably mentioned in the above-named work, and Isaac Pocock (died 1835), a painter of historical pictures and dramatic writer. Operatic dramas on the Waverley Novels seem to have been his main productions. Those who enjoy "gader-eening" amongst tombs will find many curious verses in the churchyard.

Embarking again we proceed along the course of the river which here takes a great bend. At Bourne End a Celtic boat was found which is now in the British Museum. We pass Cookham Dean, a pleasant hamlet, and about three miles from Cookham we see on the right bank Little Marlow where antiquaries have recently been busy excavating the remains of a little nunnery founded in the thirteenth century by the De Clares. Another mile and a half's rowing brings us to Great Marlow. It has a hideous modern church that took the place of a fine Gothic one in 1835. It contains some interesting monuments, including one erected to the M.P. of Marlow of the time of the Commonwealth, Sir Myles Hobart.

It has a representation of the upsetting of his coach which caused his death. A portrait of the Spotted Negro Boy painted by Coventry hangs in the vestry. In the Roman Catholic church is preserved a famous relic from Reading Abbey, the hand of St. James, the Apostle.¹ The town hall was designed by Wyatt in 1807. The principal relic of old time in Marlow is the "old Deanery," erected in the fourteenth century. It has a grand old hall with windows of the Decorated period. With Marlow is always associated the name of Shelley who wrote here his "Revolt of Islam." His house is still standing in West Street, and here also lived the author of *Frank Fairlegh*, Francis Smedley. There is much else to record about the old town, but our boat is waiting and we must hasten on.

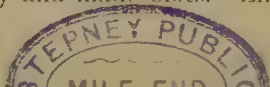
Our next stopping place is Bisham Abbey where we could linger with pleasure the whole length of a summer day. The beauty of the scenery and the historical associations of this monastic house and architectural charms, are delightful in the extreme. The present owner, Sir Henry Vansittart-Neale, once wrote for me a history of his house, but as we are bound for the Vale of the White Horse and the Cotswold country, and that, as our country folk say, "will tak' a deal o' doin'." I must content myself with a brief résumé. In King Stephen's time the manor was granted to the Knights Templars who had a preceptory here. After their fall it passed to the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose revived society still holds sway at St. John's, Clerkenwell, and has carried on its noble work, still caring for the wounded and the sick. However, the manor stayed not long with the knights. It passed through various hands, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, Hugh Despencer and Ebulo l'Estrange, until Edward III gave it to William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, in 1335, who founded a Priory

¹ Its history has been traced in my book *The Memorials of Old Buckinghamshire*.

of Benedictine monks of the order of St. Augustine. The minster became the burial place of many distinguished persons. Four Earls of Salisbury lay there, and two Earls of Warwick, including the great king-maker, whose body was brought here from the blood-stained field of Barnet. The minster church of Bisham must have been resplendent with the gorgeous tombs of their illustrious men. But all have vanished. The spoliation of the monasteries came. The dissolution of Bisham was exceptional. The royal spoiler first annexed it to Medmenham Abbey, which we shall visit presently, then revived the abbey, placing there monks of the Benedictine Order in 1537; but a year later he changed his mind, and the abbey was finally dissolved, plundered and devastated. The divorced queen, Anne of Cleves, received the house as a residence, and, not liking it, exchanged it for a place in Kent with Sir Philip Hoby, whose family brought much honour and credit to the old house.

The Hoby family seem all to have been learned. Sir Philip acted as Ambassador to the Court at Rome. The Princess Elizabeth was consigned to him as a prisoner during part of her sister's reign—so it is said; but this lacks confirmation. At any rate as queen she held a council here. Sir Philip was succeeded by his brother, Sir Thomas, whose "travels and lief" have been published by the Royal Historical Society. He was a brilliant scholar and linguist, the translator of *The Courtier* of Castiglione, ambassador to the Court of France, where he died, not without suspicion of poisoning, in the prime of life. His wife was also a very learned lady, and had a great love for writing epitaphs, for heraldry, and for the pomp of funerals. You can see some of her achievements in Bisham church. She married, after her first husband's death, John, Lord Russell, son of the Earl of Bedford.

This lady is the victim of a ghost story. This tells that she was teaching her young son to write in a copy-book, who wrote badly and made blots. Enraged, she struck him and



the boy died. Hence her ghost is said to haunt the house, ever troubled and distressed, trying in vain to wash out the traces of her crime, the blood-stains on her hands. Some copy-books were found in the house during a restoration of a wall, and one is said to have been covered with blots, and this has been taken as evidence of the truth of the story, of which the family are very sceptical. The Hobys continued to hold Bisham, until it was bought by George Vansittart in 1784, of whom the present owner is a descendant.

The greater part of the present building is Tudor. The minster and most of the old abbey precincts have disappeared. The porch has a groined vault with moulded ribs. The hall is a very fine chamber with a minstrels' gallery and with the council chamber in the same which existed when Sir Philip Hoby acquired the abbey. One side of the cloisters remains. The council chamber, wherein Elizabeth held her council, is much the same as when the queen sat there in state over three hundred years ago. The heraldic glass is interesting, showing the arms of former owners. The tapestry in the hall was made in Brussels early in the sixteenth century, and is exceptionally fine. There is much else to record about the place that cannot be told here. Mr. Ernest Dormer has written of it in my *Archæological Journal* that concerns the counties of Berks, Bucks and Oxon: "It has all the beauties which the period and the hand of time and nature and the old architects can give to it. Many indeed are the pleasure-seekers who rest upon their oars and gaze with thoughtful eyes towards one of the sweetest homes in the valley of the Thames. Long may it stand."

Embarking again, another mile and a half brings us to another monastic institution, Hurley Priory, of which the vicar, the Rev. F. T. Wethered, is the able and learned historian. He has examined endless documents and his work is a mine of antiquarian lore. Few villages can rival Hurley in interest. It has a number of half-timbered cottages;

the dovecote of the monastery, the remains of that institution including the church, and the historical associations of Lady Place, constitute an extraordinary number of special attractions, and the village is fortunate in possessing such an enthusiastic and able historian. He considers that part of his church is Saxon and that it was destroyed by the Danes, who left their mark in the Danes Ditches at Danesfield just across the Thames. Hurley Priory was founded by Geoffrey de



Hurley Priory

Mandeville in 1086. It was a cell of Westminster. The founder owed much of his piety to his wife Leceline "by whose counsel" he wrote in his charter, "I began this good work." The church is the burial place of Edith, sister of Edward the Confessor. It is mainly of Norman construction, the chancel being of the Decorated period (c. 1350). There are two seventeenth century monuments of the Lovelace family, and a brass to John Doyles, 1492. North of the church is a quadrangle called the Paradise, and on the north of this still stands

the refectory of the monks who were of the Benedictine Order. It has a Norman doorway and the arches in the hall are Decorated (c. 1307). West of the church are two large tithe barns of the same period and the dovecote which would accommodate 1,500 pigeons. The number of monks did not usually exceed sixteen. The monastery at the Reformation was conveyed by Henry VIII to Westminster and subsequently to Charles Howard who sold it to Leonard Chamberlain. It soon passed to the Lovelace family who held it for over a century. Richard Lovelace on the ruins of the monastic buildings reared a noble house, "a perplexing labyrinth of panelled rooms," called Lady Place, its name being derived from our Lady to whom the monastery was dedicated. The most notable member of the family was Richard, Lord Lovelace, who favoured the arrival of the Prince of Orange. It is said that in this house the designs for inviting the Prince and the arrangements for his coming to invade England were devised. Macaulay has a famous passage on the subject :

"This mansion, built by his ancestors out of the spoils of the Spanish galleons from the Indies, rose on the ruins of a house of our Lady in this beautiful valley, through which the Thames, not yet defiled by the precincts of a great capital, rolls under woods of beech, and round the gentle hills of Berks. Beneath the stately saloon, adorned by Italian pencils, was a subterranean vault, in which the bones of ancient monks had sometimes been found. In this dark chamber some zealous and daring opponents of the government held many midnight conferences during that anxious time when England was impatiently expecting the Protestant wind."

The house, in which Admiral Kempenfelt, the hero of the "Royal George," which

"Went down with all her crew complete,"

once lived here with his brother, has entirely disappeared except for these vaults.

We embark again, and soon another monastery appears in sight upon the Bucks shore, the famous Medmenham Abbey,

famous not only for its monastic establishment, but infamous, too, for the orgies of that mad company of pseudo-monks who carried on their revels here in the eighteenth century. The monastery was founded by Hugh de Bolebac who was also the founder of Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire for Cistercian monks A.D. 1145. He gave Medmenham to be a cell of that abbey, but as it was not built until 1200, after Hugh's death, it was left to his brother to carry out his wishes. The Cistercians practised a most austere rule. They wore a white habit, and must have appeared to be very picturesque amongst the green trees of their home and the blue river water. At its suppression the abbey was very poor and had only two brothers left.

Browne Willis in 1718 wrote that the abbey house seemed to have been, in the most part, built since the dissolution, probably by the Duffield family who held the estate for two hundred years. A century later only one pillar of the north aisle of the chapel remained, the buildings having been used as a quarry to supply stones for the erection of cottages and farms. Within the cloisters there was a large room fitted up with coloured glass which was probably built by the sham monks of whose doings I must give some account.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards Lord Le Despencer, formed a club or fraternity of his companions, calling themselves the Franciscan Order, after the Christian name of their leader, taking for their motto, "Fay ce que voudras," or "do as you please," which is still inscribed over a square ancient doorway behind the sham tower of the abbey. Mrs. Climensson kindly wrote an account of this strange and profligate society for my book, *The Memorials of Old Buckinghamshire*, and to her and to that curious romance, *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea*, I am indebted for what I know about them. The principal members of this reckless community were—The Principal, Sir Francis Dashwood; the Earl of Sandwich, Hon. Bubb Dod-

dington ; Charles Churchill, Paul Whitehead (poets) ; Selwyn, John Wilkes, Robert Lloyd, Lord Melcombe Regis, Henry Lovibond Collins, Dr. Bates, Sir William Stanhope, Sir John Dashwood King, Sir John Aubrey. The fraternity was known as the "Hell Fire Club." It is perhaps as well that most of their proceedings should be buried in oblivion. Their rites have been described as "Bacchic festivals, Devil worship, and a mockery of all the rites of religion." They slept in cradles, and one that belonged to John Wilkes is still in existence. They used to stay at Medmenham for a week and assemble twice a year. They wore white habits like the Cistercians, and assumed the names of the Apostles. Novices were admitted with a shameful imitation of prayers and hymns. Drunken orgies took place and scenes that cannot be described. The story of the breaking up of the society is curious. There are two versions. One is that an ape descended the chimney whom they took to be his Satanic majesty, but that story related in *Chrysal* is probably correct. A novice who had been rejected from full participation in the mysteries, was only a probationer, introduced a big baboon, dressed like the Devil, into a large chest, to the lock of which he attached a cord secreted under the carpet of his chair. This he pulled in the midst of a mock service, and the baboon leaped out and jumped on the table. The company believed it to be the Devil himself. The novice fell on his face and lay sprawling on the floor. The baboon flew on his shoulders, clasped his neck, and gibbered in his ears. Terror seized the community. At last the inventor of the joke opened a window and the baboon escaped. It was seen by the villagers, and scandal soon spread the story of Devil worship. The club was dissolved. The abbey became a pleasure garden for tourists, but is now in private hands. The front as seen from the river is modern, but it is picturesque, clad in a mantle of ivy and surrounded by tall trees.

For the explorer who has plenty of time on his hands there

are many pretty villages in this Thames valley just away from the river which are worthy of attention. Ibstone with its Norman and Early English church, Turville which has also a Norman church, Fingest where the Bishops of Lincoln had a palace and Hambleden are all worthy of a visit. At Hambleden I once lectured on village antiquities. Some enthusiastic ladies set about examining their district. They found a large number of what appeared to be Roman tiles, and this led to the discovery of a Roman villa of great interest, and Viscount Hambleden, son of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, who resides at Greenlands, erected a museum for the exhibition of the spoils. It is a beautiful village with an interesting church. Greenlands was besieged during the Civil War.

Soon we arrive at a spot memorable in the records of Henley Regatta, the little Grecian temple, which is the starting place of the boats that contend in that great aquatic contest. On the left is Remenham church, rebuilt in 1870, in place of a Norman building, and opposite is Fawley Court, a house designed by Sir Christopher Wren that replaced an older house which belonged to Sir Bulstrode Whitelock, the friend of Cromwell. This was plundered by Royalist soldiers, and its owner wailed over his losses, his books and manuscripts, his deer and hounds and household stuff, as well he might. Three counties meet here, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and across the river our shire of Berks.

The bridge at Henley has a history. It was built in 1786, and the sculptured marks of the Thames and Isis that adorn it were carved by the Hon. Mrs. Damer, the accomplished daughter of General Conway who then owned Park Place. She was a kinswoman of Horace Walpole, who bequeathed to her Strawberry Hill for her life; and who greatly admired her art, an opinion that was not shared by Miss Frances Burnley. Erasmus Darwin wrote of her:

Long with soft touch shall Damer's chisel charm,
, With grace delight us and with beauty warm.

Henley at one time could boast of its castle. Not far away from where Rotherfield Court now stands, stood a place called Ancastle, which indicated its location. We have traces of Henley's castle in a dispute which arose in 1269 between Prince Edward, afterwards King Edward I, and Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester, when the Earl was compelled to yield this castle, with others, to Richard, "King of the Romans," brother of Henry III. An examination of the documents of the corporation, which date back to 1397, proves that Henley was at one time a walled town. It was situate in the kingdom of Mercia, while the county of Berks on the other side of the river was in Wessex. No one has yet discovered how old the corporate life of Henley really is. The ledger book dates back to the reign of Richard II, and the town possesses three charters, which were granted in the reign of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, George I respectively, and a modern one of 1883. The town hall was built in 1795 to replace the old guild hall that had collapsed through age. It contains some good pictures, including a portrait of George I by Sir Godfrey Kneller, which was presented to the corporation by Lady Kneller, a daughter of the rector, who resided at Henley Park.

The church was erected in the thirteenth century, but the principal parts of the present structure were built in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The tower was raised probably by Bishop Loughland, of Lincoln, about 1520. This ecclesiastic was a native of Henley and he was confessor to Henry VIII. The tower is a conspicuous and beautiful object in all views of the town, and is built of black flints intermingled with stone, and has lofty turrets at each angle with battlements. Many modern additions and improvements have been made in recent years. On the north of the chancel is the Lady chapel, on the south the Jesus chapel. Two squints will be noticed in the pillars at the entrance to the chancel enabling people to see the elevation of the host in the

chantry chapels. The windows are filled with good modern glass, but one regrets the destruction of an ancient window depicting the murder of St. Thomas of Canterbury, about which Miles Coverdale wrote to Henry VIII complaining that "it was suffered to stand." It would be in vain to attempt to record all the monuments of Henley's famous sons and daughters. In the baptistry there is a fine one of Lady Elizabeth Periam, showing the effigy of the lady in the costume of her period (1621). She was a sister of Lord Chancellor Bacon, and was thrice married. Her second husband was Sir Henry Neville of Billingbear, which we have visited. She was a benefactress to Henley and founded the Blue Coat School. The celebrated General Dumouriez, an exile from France in the time of the Revolution, has an inscription in his honour over the south aisle door. Besides the chapels already noted were others dedicated to St. Leonard, St. Catherine, St. Clement, St. Nicholas, St. John, the Holy Trinity and the Holy Rood. In the churchyard is the tomb of Richard Jennings, the master builder of St. Paul's cathedral.

In the vaults lies the body of Mary Blandy, whose melancholy story aroused the sympathy of many. She was the daughter of a rich Henley solicitor and fell in love, when she was quite young, with a scoundrel, Captain Cranstoun, who was a married man, and who obtained great influence over her. Her father discovered the character of the wretch, and refused to allow his daughter to associate with him. Then the Captain sent poison in the form of a powder to Mary to administer to her father, telling her that it was a love philtre. She mixed it with his tea, and this proved fatal. Mad with grief she tried to escape, but she was caught by a crowd of Henley folk and conveyed to Oxford, where she was tried in the Divinity School and condemned to death. Nothing could shake her assertion of innocence. She was quite ignorant of the nature of the powder which her lover had sent, but she was hanged in 1752.

Henley has many hostelrys which in time of peace when the Regattas used to be held, and during the long summer days when house-boats congregate on the Thames fair banks, are full of guests. Chief of them is the old "Red Lion Hotel," which has a famous history. It was an old coaching inn; into its yard in the palmy days of coach-traffic a score of these vehicles drove every day. It has been modernized, but its story goes back to the time of Charles I who stayed there in 1632 on his way from London to Oxford, and again when the Civil War began and Prince Rupert's dragoons were quartered in the town. You can still see the king's monogram and arms over a fireplace with the date of his earlier visit in an upstairs room. The Duke of Marlborough had a special room reserved for him, so that he break his journey here when travelling to his home at Blenheim Palace. The writers of guide books always tell you that William Shenstone, the poet, wrote his well-known lines here inscribed on a pane of glass:

To thee, fair Freedom, I retire
 From flattery, cards, and dice and din;
 Nor art thou found in mansions higher
 Than the low cot or humble Inn.

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
 Where'er his stages may have been;
 May sigh to think he still has found
 His warmest welcome at an Inn.

Boswell tells us that when travelling with Dr. Johnson "we happened to lie this night at the Inn at Henley where Shenstone wrote these lines." Those who have followed the route of these distinguished travellers must know that the Henley here mentioned was Henley-in-Arden, and in no way connected with our Henley-on-Thames. So this pleasant allusion must be for ever abandoned. However the "Red Lion" has many memories of distinguished guests, whose visits Mrs. Climençon has recorded in her book on the history of the town.

She tells of George III, the Queen and their daughters having breakfast here on July 12, 1788, of Miss Burney's visit who describes it as "beautifully situated," of the Prince Regent who devoured fourteen of Mrs. Dixon's famous small mutton chops, and of the visit of the Allied Princes in 1814 on their way to Oxford after the temporary overthrow of Napoleon, when Lady Malmesbury held court at the "Red Lion," and watched the grand procession of royalties as they passed. The "Catherine Wheel," the "White Hart," the "Bull and the Bear," are all ancient inns.

When shall we see again another Henley Regatta, that glad festival of youth, that gigantic river picnic, when all the world is there, and house-boats line the bank, and the river is thick with boats, and the greenswards of the Clubs, of Phillis and Fawley Courts, are crowded with gaily dressed throngs, and "all is merry as a marriage bell"? There is no sight in the world, I suppose, so beautiful, so wonderful, as Henley Regatta on a bright summer day. Many of its heroes, grand young-limbed athletes, lie in unknown graves in France and Flanders. Maimed warriors will, perhaps, come to see the scenes of their former triumphs; but I question whether the regatta will ever be the same again. But adieu to these solemn reflections!

The regatta had its origin in the first Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race which took place on June 10, 1829. Ten years later it dawned with a modest programme, and now it is a function known all over the world attracting crews from many foreign nations until the bugle of war called men to a more serious conflict.

So with a last fond look at the beautiful river from Henley bridge we bid farewell to the old town with many recollections of happy days spent on its fair stream, and take the road again. There is much to be seen in the neighbourhood. Chief among the notable houses is Greys Court where are the remains of a feudal castle and a fine Elizabethan mansion.

You can still see four of the towers of the fortress which was mainly built in the time of Edward III. The mansion is the home of the Stapleton family.

We return to our Forest town, Wokingham, through Wargrave and Twyford, and after a good night's rest at the "Rose" we will start again on our pilgrimage and explore further our Forest district.

VIII

Wokingham to Miss Mitford's Country

CROSSING the railway at Wokingham station we pass along the Barkham Road. Journeying about a mile we come to the "Leather Bottle Inn" which, although it had been entirely rebuilt, Prince Christian always imagined appeared in one of Morland's pictures. He once asked me to investigate the matter, and I spent some time in the British Museum endeavouring to discover the truth of the claim. I found that the painter was certainly in this neighbourhood when he stayed at inns, painted pictures and sold them to defray the cost of a night's lodging and a drunken carouse; but nothing certain could I find. Old names linger long in our country. We pass on the left Dole's Farm. In Norden's map, made three hundred years ago, Dole's Hill is recorded. So we pass to my village of Barkham where these lines are written, and the story of which I have told in some of my books. It is a very pretty village and its history is ancient, dating back to the time when a Saxon thane gave Bloreham to the monks of Abingdon Abbey in 951 A.D. Its boundaries are given in the chronicle. In Saxon times it passed away from the rule of the abbey and in the time of King Edward the Confessor it was in the possession of a Saxon thane named Ælmer. After the Conquest it was taken possession of by William the Conqueror who doubtless often hunted the "tall stag" within its boundary. I have traced the history of the



Barkham.

descent of the manor in the *Victoria County History of Berkshire*. The most notable of its owners were Sir Thomas Neville whose daughter Agnes (sometimes styled Anne de Neville) brought by marriage the manor to Gilbert Bullock of Arborfield, whose family held it until the end of the sixteenth century. We may scent a little romance in this marriage. Gilbert's father, Robert Bullock, had been trustee for the Crown of certain land in Barkham supposed to belong to John Mautravers, and forfeited by him to the king on account of his treason. To this land Agnes made a successful claim, on the ground that she had been wrongfully dispossessed of it by Mautravers, and Robert Bullock was authorized to make it over to her in 1335. Then finding Mistress Agnes a considerable heiress he arranged a marriage between her and his son Gilbert. The Bullocks sold the manor with that of Arborfield to Edward Standen in whose family it remained for some time. At the end of the eighteenth century the manor was purchased by Lady Gower and was held by the Hon. Admiral Leveson Gower and his descendants, until it was bought by Mr. John Walter whose grandson is now the lord of the manor, although the manor house has been purchased by Mr. A. N. Garland.

In the Public Record Office there is a very early document relating to the village, the king's reeve's account of the manor *temp.* Edward I. It is the only one of that early period extant, and records the sale of the produce of the manor, including "iis. *id.* for the yield of x cocks and x hens."

There was an old church dedicated to St. James in the village, but unhappily the Goths and Vandals of the nineteenth century pulled it down in 1860 and erected a brand new church which has many merits. The chipped flint work of its walls is admirable, and it has a graceful shingle spire. Mr. John Walter, who has left his mark upon so many villages in the district, added a new chancel and transepts, and built a new rectory. I have recovered the ancient door of the

church which reposed for many years in a garden in Wokingham. There is a much battered wooden effigy of a lady in the porch, believed to be that of Mistress Agnes Neville, the daughter of a lord of the manor in the fourteenth century, whose acquaintance we have already made and who married the son of Robert Bullock, squire of Arborfield, and thus united the two manors which remained in the Bullock family for many years. We have an ancient and beautiful Elizabethan chalice, the date letter recording that it was fashioned in 1561, a paten of 1664 given by John Stronghill "when he was heade-churchwarden"; another paten given by one of my learned predecessors, Dr. Gabriel, and a noble flagon, the gift of Dame Rebecca Kingsmill in 1729. These treasures we prize very highly.

The present manor house does not date back earlier than the last century. I remember the village pound which disappeared about thirty years ago, and a curious stand for shoeing oxen that formerly stood near the smithy of the "Bull Inn." In this hostel the old Court Leet and Court Baron were held, and the tithe dinners which must have been days of trial for the rector and of revel for the tithe payers. Some paid a small tithe of a few shillings and always determined to make up for this payment by eating and drinking as much as possible. Before the war the inn used to provide suppers for the ringers and for the cricket club, and to resound with decorous merriment on their festal occasions.

One of the most remarkable of my predecessors was the Rev. Dr. David Davis who held the living from 1782 to 1819. He also acted as chaplain to Lady Gower of Bill Hill who owned the manor, and I have in my possession a note book of his in which he recorded his receipts and expenditure. Some of the items are curious. He was chaplain to Lord Cremorne and received £10 a year for his services. Lady Cremorne paid the expenses of a curate when he attended the family in France, but he protested that he had no right to the money.

He farmed and sold the produce to the farmers and gentry in the neighbourhood, and was much troubled about some money that was owing to him in Barbadoes, and was doubtful whether he would ever receive it. He was charitable, paid for children's schooling, gave money to shipwrecked tramps ("impostors"), lost money at cards, paid £2 3s. for a bob wig block and stand. The book is amazingly interesting, and I hope to describe its contents more fully some day.

But his chief title to fame and to the affectionate regard of his own and of future generations is that he made a careful examination of the economic condition of the labouring poor. He was the author of the *Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, published in 1795, and this book together with Eden's *State of the Poor*, published two years later, is the chief authority on social conditions in the eighteenth century. My worthy predecessor is less famous than he deserves to be if we are to judge from the fact that the *Dictionary of National Biography* only knows about him that he was rector of Barkham in Berkshire, and a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford, that he received a D.D. degree in 1800, that he is the author of this book, and that he died, "perhaps, in 1809," which he certainly did not. But Davis's book which contains the result of most careful and patient investigation, made a profound impression on contemporary observers. Hewlett called it "incomparable," and it is impossible for the modern reader to resist its atmosphere of reality and truth. This country parson gives us a simple, faithful and sincere picture of the facts, seen without illusion or prejudice, and free from all the conventional affectations of the time: a priceless legacy to those who are impatient of the generalisations with which the rich dismiss the poor. He gives tables of the actual receipts of labourers' families in Barkham and in other parts of England, and of the actual necessary expenditure, and shows how impossible it was in those days for them to live and bring up their families. Some day I hope to collect the details of his life, and can only

now just mention his conclusions. He wrote: "Allow the cottager a little land about his dwelling for keeping a cow, for planting potatoes, for raising flax or hemp. Convert the lands of the kingdom into small arable farms, a certain quantity every year, to be let on favourable terms to industrious families. Restrain the engrossment and over-enlargement of farms. The propriety of these measures cannot, I think, be questioned."

Our registers date back to 1538, the first year that Thomas Cromwell ordered such books to be kept, showing that even then the rectors of Barkham were good and obedient men and readily conformed to the orders imposed upon them, a character which I hope they have not since lost. In "the short and simple annals of the poor," and of the squires and farmers there is much of interest. The first recorded name is that of Ball which family was very prolific, and I have tried to prove that they were the ancestors of Mary Ball,¹ who was the mother of President Washington. Americans have sometimes come to search this old book to find traces of their ancestors, and I shall not forget the delight of some of those searchers who have discovered that for which they sought.

There were two moated farmhouses in the parish that testify to the wild nature of the Forest in olden days when it was found necessary to have some such protection from outlaws and roving bands of gipsies. Barkham was also rather famous for a family of parish clerks. A story I have told elsewhere of Elijah Hutt is worth retelling. When the new church was being built Elijah found his way with some companions to the neighbouring church of Finchampstead one Sunday. He arrived just as the first Lesson was being read, and during its course the clergyman called out in stentorian tones, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Elijah was rather startled, but remained silent. However when the query was

¹ *Out of the Ivory Palaces.* By P. H. Ditchfield.

again repeated with emphasis, he imagined that it must be addressed to him. So he arose in his place, touched his forelock, and replied, "Please, sir, Barkham church is undergoing repair, so we be cumed here."

Another story is told about his son who was a great character. Sometimes he used to fall asleep during the sermon, and on one occasion when he was expected to say a decorous "Amen," he called aloud "Fill 'em up again, Mrs. Collyer, fill 'em again." Now, Mrs. Collyer was the much respected landlady of the "Bull Inn," and the conclusion is obvious. During many years right into my time he served the parish well in his old-fashioned ways, and I missed him more than I can say when he died.

The war has made us a semi-military village and khaki is seen everywhere. We have a Remount Depôt just beyond our borders. Horses and mules parade our roads and dwell in our fields, and we send them with sad hearts on their way to the front to help our men to fight our battles for England and to win the victory.

But I must not keep you too long in this pleasant village. We must pass on to Arborfield Cross, or Arofield Cross, as it appears in Norden's map. I may say a word or two about the derivation of the name, showing that even learned men may err. The unlearned etymologist at once declares that of course *Arbor* is the Latin for a tree, and *field* is, of course, a field, in place where trees were felled. But that is a strange hybrid sort of name, a mixture of Saxon and Latin of which every one who knows anything of the science of language would naturally beware. Yet—*mirabile dictu*—Professor Skeat fell into error over this name. He says it is comparatively modern, and connects it with the Anglo-French *herber* or *erber*, a herb-garden or *arbour*. In order to discover the correct derivation of a word it is necessary to find out the original mode of spelling it, and Arborfield appears in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as Edburgefeld and Erberge-

feld and Hereburgefild, and signifies the field or settlement of a man named Hereburgh.

The Cross has a picturesque, old, half-timbered house, the post office, with a smithy adjoining it, a pretty green, and an old inn called the "Bull." Here five roads meet, the road we have traversed from Barkham continuing to Shinfield and Reading. That to the right conducts you to Bearwood and Wokingham, and on the left are two roads, one leading to Eversley and Aldershot, and the other to Swallowfield.

Unexpected discoveries are made sometimes of the prehistoric folk who inhabited our fields and villages. Some men employed in the building of Arborfield Court brought to me some old pottery taken from a spot eight or ten feet below the surface of the ground on a hill, that was evidently a prehistoric burial mound or tumulus, and in a field in the parish a Celtic gold coin was found recently. These facts have been hitherto unpublished. But the chief interest of the place is associated with the hall and manor. I have often had occasion to mention the Bullock family. They were important people and of great antiquity.¹ Osmund Bulloc of Arborfield in 1190 presented my predecessor John, Rector of Barkham, to the charge of the chapel there. He was not very careful in the selection of his curates. One of these bright clerics in an archidiaconal examination failed to parse the sentence "Te, pater clementissime, oramus," and when asked what governed "Te," replied, "Pater, because the Father governed all things." These Bullocks served well their generations, indeed, almost countless generations, their tenure lasting until the end of the sixteenth century. The support of large families and accumulated debts necessitated the sale of the property, which was purchased by Edmund Standen of Chancery, father of Sir William Standen, whose family held

¹ The various branches of the family have been admirably recorded by Mr. Llewellyn Bullock, a Rugby master, in a privately printed volume.

it for 150 years. The beautiful Jacobean Manor House, the ruins of which we shall presently hear Miss Mitford describing, was built by them. John Thorpe was the architect. It had a large entrance hall, so great that it was said a carriage could drive through it. When Edward Standen, the last of his race, the victim of Molly Mogg's attractions (to whom I have referred), died in 1730, the estate was bequeathed to his wife; and then after her death it devolved upon his heir Richard Aldworth, the ancestor of Lord Braybroke, then a minor, and was sold by his guardian under an Act of Parliament (4 Geo. II) to Pelsant Reeves, whose son John had two children, Pelsant and Elmira. Pelsant was Captain of the 1st Royals and was killed at Toulon in 1793. His fellow-officer and friend George Dawson, a Yorkshire squire, of Osgodby Hall, used to visit at Arborfield; and a friendship resulted in George Dawson marrying the heiress Elmira, who had a fortune of £10,000 and the estate.¹ These Dawsons are of royal descent, and can trace their pedigree to King Edward III, through his son Lionel, Duke of Clarence. Their history is extraordinarily interesting, and this I have traced by the aid of family papers, but it would be too long to be told here. Sometimes they were even extremely prosperous; then poverty stood at their gates and demanded entrance. In spite of the increase in fortune brought to George Dawson by his marriage, and owing to a vast expenditure and the maintenance of Osgodby Hall and Arborfield Hall, financial troubles befell the family. The old Berkshire house was in bad repair. Much money was needed to restore it, and this was not forthcoming. "Pull it down," said the owner in a hasty moment speaking at random. The order was eagerly seized upon by the steward of the manor and at once executed. Axes and hammers were turned upon the famous mansion, and doubtless the steward largely benefited by the outrageous destruction. So "the old house at Aberleigh"

¹ *History of the Dawson Family*. By P. H. Ditchfield (privately printed).



Arborfield Hall.



perished. When George Pelsant Dawson, son of George Dawson, inherited the property, he determined to rebuild the hall as much as possible, residing at the cottage while the work was in progress. He sold the property to Sir John Conroy, keeper of the Priory Purse to the Duchess of Kent, the mother of Queen Victoria, who built a portion of the present house. For some reason he incurred the displeasure of the young Princess, and one of her first acts on coming to the throne was to banish Sir John from the Court. He retired to Arborfield. The house was much enlarged by Mr. and Mrs. Hargreaves, who bought the place, while the old courtier retired to the cottage which has taken to itself wings and blossomed out into Arborfield Grange. Miss Mitford has left us a description of the elder house and this I cannot refrain from quoting :

“ And crossing the stile we were immediately in what had been a spacious park, and still retained something of the character, though the park itself had long been broken into arable fields—and in full view of the Great House, a beautiful structure of James the First's time, whose glassless windows and dilapidated doors form a melancholy contrast with the strength and entireness of the rich and massive front. The story of that ruin—for such it is—is always to me singularly affecting. It is that of the decay of an ancient and distinguished family, gradually reduced from the highest wealth and station to actual poverty. The house and park, and a small estate around it, were entailed on a distant relative and could not be alienated ; and the late owner, the last of his name and lineage, after long struggling with debt and difficulty, farming his own lands, and clinging to his magnificent home with a love of place almost as tenacious as that of the younger Foscari, was at last forced to abandon it, retired to a paltry lodging in a paltry town, and died there about twenty years ago, broken-hearted. His successor, bound by no ties of association to the spot, and rightly judging the residence to be much too large for the diminished estate, immediately sold the superb fixtures, and would have entirely taken down the house, if, on making the attempt, the masonry had not been found so solid that the materials were not worth the labour. A great part, however, of one side is laid open, and the splendid chambers, with their carving and gilding, are exposed to the wind and rain—sad memorials of past grandeur. The grounds have been left in merciful neglect ; the park, indeed, is broken up, the lawn is mown twice a year

like a common hay-field, the grotto mouldering into ruin, and the fishponds choked with rushes and aquatic plants; but the shrubs and flowering trees are undestroyed, and have grown into a magnificence of size and wildness of beauty, such as we may imagine them to attain in their native forests. Nothing can exceed their luxuriance, especially in the spring, when the lilac, the laburnum, and double-cherry put forth their glorious blossoms. There is a sweet sadness in the sight of such floweriness amidst such desolation; it seems the triumph of nature over the destructive power of man." ¹

Part of the old house is preserved in the stables of the present mansion, and a very fine bit of mellow brickwork it is. It is interesting to note that when Mr. and Mrs. Hargreaves purchased the estate they were ignorant concerning the Dawson ownership, and Mrs. Hargreaves, who is a descendant of the American branch of that family, was especially charmed to find herself in the home of her ancestors.

Close to the old house stands the ruins of the old church of St. Bartholomew. About half a century ago the timbers of the roof were deemed to be unsafe. The church was a long way from the village and very close to the Hall; so Sir Thomas Browne, a relative of Mrs. Hargreaves, generously built a very handsome new church more easy of access to the villages, and the old church was left to moulder and decay. Embowered in a thick, interlaced bower of yew, holly, pine, honeysuckle and tangled growth, the remains of this little thirteenth century church present a scene of crumbling melancholy beauty that is pathetic. The east end wall clad with ivy still stands. On the splays, when wind and rain had worked their will upon them, some interesting mural paintings were disclosed. We walk along the central aisle of the old nave formed of large red tiles uneven and worn. Beneath our feet are tombstones scarred and scratched. We ascend the three brick steps leading to where the altar stood. There is a

¹ It may be observed that Miss Mitford was not quite correct in her statement about the Dawson family. Mr. Vincent in *Highways and Byways in Berkshire* is hopelessly wrong, as I have already pointed out (cf. p. 48).

piscina, and on the floor two small tablets to the Hodgkinsons rectors of Arborfield, and of the wife of one of them who died in the second year of her marriage :

“ A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear ;
 Forgive the wish that would have kept you here.”

Another inscription records :

Heere lyeth the body of Thomas Haward, Gent, wth Anne his wyfe & Frances there onely child who was married to William Thorold Esq. and has issue 7 sones & 7 daughters. This Thomas Haward depected T 24th of November ao dmi 1643.

When the old church was dismantled, the north aisle was restored and re-roofed and divided into two portions. There is a porch leading to the southern division, and the old door of the church with a beam over it bearing the date 1631. Around the walls are many marble tablets to the memory of the Conroy family who were of Irish origin, and are now, I believe, extinct. In the other portion are the memorials of the Standens, including a fine alabaster tomb of Sir William Standen (1639). Another Grey's *Elegy* might be written upon the dismal graveyard, and with mournful feelings the pilgrim passes into the park and resumes his walk. At the gate of the park there is a delightful cottage, L-shaped in plan, with a tall gable and tile-clad roof and well-tended garden. I have often wished to restore this charming little example of humble domestic architecture.

Crossing the Loddon by a new bridge we think of Pope's line

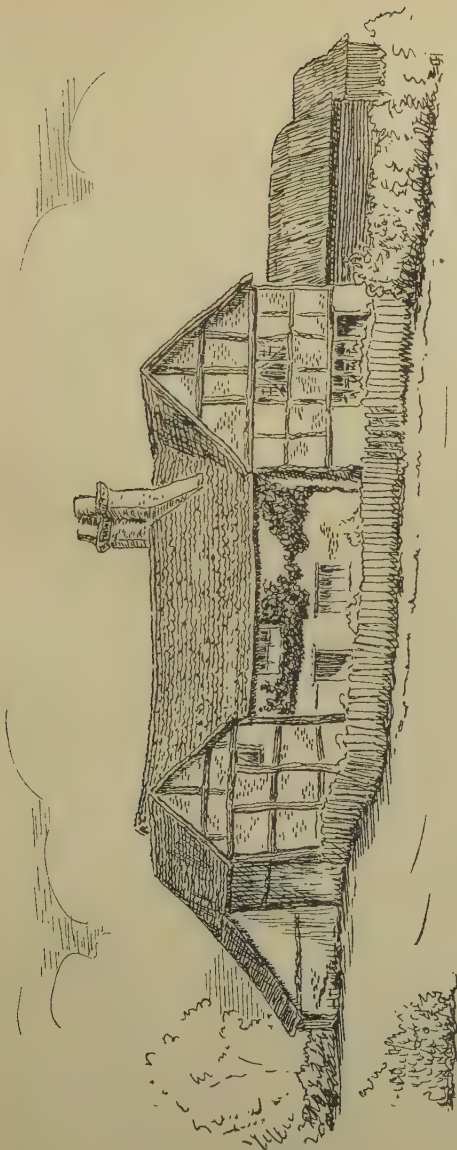
“ The Loddon slow with verdant alders crowned,”

and find ourselves in the parish of Shinfield. Lord Ribblesdale, when he was Master of the Royal Buck Hounds, trusting in the information of a lady that there was a ford here, plunged gallantly into the flowing tide and was nearly engulfed. The inn on the left bears the sign “ Magpie and Parrot,” presumably alluding to the effect of good liquor in making its votaries talkative. School Green has a fine old

set of school buildings founded by Richard Pigot in 1707, and endowed by him. So we pass to the church wherein doubtless Miss Mitford worshipped, as Three Mile Cross, the original of *Our Village*, is in this parish. It stands on a hill, whence a fine view is seen over a vast tract of hill and dale. In the valley below, the gentle Lodden winds on in bright and tranquil loveliness; a little further and just peeping from its sylvan covert are the gables of Arborfield Hall, and in the distance may be seen curling above the summit of thick woods by which it is screened, the blue smoke of "Our Village." The manor house adjoins the churchyard, formerly the old rectory, the seat of the Cobhams. An embryo "Garden City" with modern red-brick cottages dotted down as if from a monster pepper-caster, does not improve the appearance of the village. The church is interesting, mainly Decorated and Perpendicular with a fine seventeenth century brick tower. In the church there are some interesting monuments, notably one to the Beke family of Hartley Court, representing the husband and his wife Jane and his daughter Eliza kneeling at a prayer desk. There is another to the Martyn family (1607) and Edward Martyn in 1596 built the chapel at the east end of the south aisle.

So we pass by a pleasant road past the modern vicarage to that little nest of houses where the immortal book was born, and where the gentle soul of Mary Russell Mitford lived in the early years of her literary life.

She was one of the earliest of lovers of country life, who first unfolded the pages of Nature's book. To her shrine we make our pilgrimage, and try to see those same sights her kindly eyes beheld and her pen so sweetly and lovingly described. Dearly did she love her Berkshire home, the village she made so famous. "No prettier country could be found anywhere," she once said, "than the shady, yet sunny Berkshire, where the scenery, without rising into grandeur, or breaking into wildness, is so peaceful, so cheerful, so varied, and yet so



In "Our Village"

thoroughly English." Nor was it only the trees and flowers that delighted her gentle spirit. She had a great love of humanity, a keen insight into the romance of rustic life. How graphically and with what affectionate interest does she describe her homely neighbours, and how fondly does she dwell on some little love story in the lives of her village youths and maidens. We can picture her neighbours as vividly as though we were living amongst them nigh a century ago. There is the retired publican, a substantial person with a comely wife, one who piques himself on independence and idleness, talks politics, reads newspapers, hates the minister, and cries out for reform. There is the village shoemaker, a pale, sickly-looking, black-haired man, the very model of sober industry; the thriving and portly landlord of "The Rose," Miss Phœbe, the belle of the village, and a host of others who live again in the pages of *Our Village*. She had a kindly interest for them all and wove romances about them, and could be very angry if her plans fell through and she discovered that "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley." I remember the wife of John W—— telling me how vexed Miss Mitford was because John, who used to look after her garden, would not marry her maid, and preferred my informant, the present Mrs. W——.

Three-Mile-Cross is three good miles from Reading, and three from Swallowfield, the home of the Russells, the story of which the present Lady Russell has so beautifully told.

The little Berkshire hamlet known throughout the world as "Our Village," is a long, "straggling, winding street at the bottom of an eminence, with a road through it, always abounding in carts, horsemen, and carriages, and lately enlivened by a stage-coach from B—— to S——, which passed through about ten days ago, and I suppose will return some time or other." It is not a very magnificent village; there is no venerable church, no village green. There is an inn with its signpost, and about a dozen cottages, built of brick, a shop or

two, and wheelwright's sheds. That is all! The house itself, where Miss Mitford lived for thirty years, is now a temperance tavern, and at the back of the house, in the garden which she loved so well, once boasting of "its pinks and stocks and carnations, and its arbour of privet not unlike a sentry-box," stands a temperance hall, fitted up with the usual unsightly accessories. Miss Mitford tells us what her home looked like in her time. "A cottage—no, a miniature house, with many additions, little odds and ends of places, pantries, and what not; all angles, and of a charming in-and-outness; a little bricked court before one half, and a little flower-yard before the other; the walls, old and weather-stained, covered with hollyhocks, roses, honeysuckles, and a great apricot tree; the casements full of geraniums (Ah! there is our superb white cat peeping out from among them); the closets (our landlord has the assurance to call them rooms) full of contrivances and corner cupboards; and the little garden behind full of common flowers, tulips, pinks, larkspurs, pæonies, stocks, and carnations, with an arbour of privet where one lives in a delicious green light, and looks out on the gayest of all gay flower-beds." Its present appearance can only be described as disappointing. One would like to see at least one room kept as Miss Mitford kept it, packed round with books up to the ceiling, with some relics of the authoress which might be gathered together, with some portraits of her friends, Mrs. Trollope, Lady Russell, Mrs. Hofland, Miss Strickland, Mrs. Opie, Harriet Martineau, and Mrs. Jamieson, and sketches of the country she loved so well. A Mitford museum would indeed be a delightful addition to this poor modern temperance tavern. Here her parents died, and are buried at Shinfield Church, about a mile away, the ancient tower of which rises above the trees in the distance. We need not follow the fortunes of her father, the poor thriftless doctor, who won £20,000 in a lottery, gambled and lived extravagantly, and brought himself and his family to poverty. He

had lived in great style at Bertram House, Grazeley, about one mile from "Our Village," but the house has been pulled down. There is, however, a delightful grassy road lined with tall elms, which we must see, Miss Mitford's favourite haunt ; and as I ride along it I sometimes seem to see her graceful figure seated on some fallen trunk, writing with her paper spread on her knee, playing with her dog Dash, or gathering the violets she loved so well.

"For ten years," the authoress wrote, "has the public endured to hear the history—half real and half imaginary—of a half-imaginary and half-real little spot on the sunny side of Berkshire. . . . They turned from the trash called fashionable novels to the common life of Miss Austen, the Irish vales of Miss Edgeworth, and my humble village stories." It would be difficult to exaggerate her importance in the neighbourhood. Her humble cottage used to be a centre of attraction to all the cleverest people in the country. Kingsley from Eversley, Canon Pearson, with his friend Dean Stanley, from Sonning ; Mr. S. Landor, Mrs. Barrett Browning, Mrs. Trollope, from Heckfield, and other celebrities, were constantly coming there. When Miss Mitford had one of her famous strawberry parties the whole lane up to her cottage was crowded with the carriages of the rank and fashion of the neighbourhood. It was speedily and universally acknowledged that her exquisite prose idylls constituted a new strain of English classics of the highest description. All around us is the region depicted in *Our Village*. Every house has its story told of it ; every field she made famous. "My beloved village," she exclaimed, and then went on to describe "the long straggling street, gay, bright, full of implements of dirt and noise, busy, merry, stirring little world . . . the winding, up-hill road with its borders of turf and its primrosy hedgerows . . . the breezy common and its fragrant gorse."

Miss Mitford led a hard life. She had been brought up in luxury, but owing to her father's extravagance she was

turned out of a comfortable home and compelled to take refuge in a tumble-down cottage. From a life of ease she was compelled to turn to one of incessant effort, having to support with her pen, as best she could, a fading invalid mother and a worthless father. She looked at first a plain little person, but a second glance revealed "a wondrous wall of forehead," and she had grey eyes with a very sweet expression. Mrs. Barrett Browning used to say that her conversation was even more interesting than her looks. "Miss Mitford dresses a little quaintly," an American visitor wrote. This was putting it mildly. Mr. Palmer of Sonning mentioned her appearance at a garden party at Holme Park in "a green baize dress, surmounted by a yellow turban." It was also reported that "the turban had the price still hanging on to it." But in spite of her dress her appearance was interesting, and a friend described her as "like lavender, the sweeter it is the more it is pressed." She was also a shrewd observer and sometimes a severe critic. She mostly said and wrote kind things; but, like all pretty purring feline personalities, if stroked the wrong way, her claws could flash out and when they did they were very sharp. Her remarks on public men like Carlyle, Wordsworth, Dr. Vallis and others were very severe.

But we must hasten on to our heroine's last resting-place. In 1851 she deserted "Our Village" and moved to a cottage in Swallowfield, which has little changed since her day. The acacias still bloom beneath which she loved to sit and write. She tells of her migration from the old house to the new: "I walked from one cottage to the other in an autumn evening when the vagrant birds, whose habit of assembling there for their annual departure, gives, I suppose, the name of Swallowfield to the village, were circling over my head, and I repeated to myself the pathetic lines of Hayley, as he saw those same birds gathering under his roof during his last illness:

"Ye gentle birds that perch aloof
And smooth your pinions on my roof,

Prepare for your departure hence
Ere winter's angry threats commence ;
Like you my soul would smooth her plume
For longer flights beyond the tomb.' "

Here, in this little home, she received many visits from the lights of literature of her day. Charles Kingsley, from his rectory at Eversley, was the first to come to her, and they were mutually fascinated. She had heaps of friends. James Payn wrote that she seemed to have known every one, from the Duke of Wellington to the last new verse-maker. But the great comfort of her closing years was her friendship with Lady Russell, widow of Sir Henry Russell, second baronet. Nothing could exceed the kindness this lady and her family bestowed upon her. This lightened the dreary hours of illness ; and when the end came, and the brave, undaunted spirit winged its way hence, Lady Russell was watching by her side, holding her hand as she sank to rest.

One last pilgrimage remains—the quiet corner in Swallowfield churchyard where Mary Russell Mitford sleeps beneath a granite cross. The flowers she loved grow around her still. In spite of all her sorrows and hard struggling, her path was always gay with flowers. Nor are we the only pilgrims here. Lovers of Nature, and of that sweet book which she opened wide for them, flock here from America and other lands whither her words have wandered. Thus we leave her, her warm heart resting and her busy hand, that wrote so much, lying in peace there, where the sun glances through the great elm trees in the beautiful churchyard of Swallowfield.

IX

Swallowfield, Eversley and Kingsley's Country

SWALLOWFIELD is a very famous village, mainly on account of the story of the large house, the home of the Russells, which has played no small part in English history. It has an interesting church, built mainly by Sir John Le Despencer, lord of Swallowfield, in 1256, who petitioned the Pope, Alexander IV to allow him to do so, pleading the dangers which he and his family had to encounter in going through the forest to mass at Sonning, from robbers in summer and floods in winter. Two Papal bulls are still in existence sent from Anagni granting this petition. The church has a grand timber belfry supported by massive beams, such as were not unusual in our Forest district when timber was plentiful. The porch is a modern imitation of fifteenth century construction, and there were two altars, one at the east end and the other in front of the screen as indicated by an ancient piscina. Under the west window is a stone coffin containing the remains of the founder. Like many other churches in the middle of the last century this one was doomed to destruction. It had been so disfigured by lath and plaster, and its many beauties so hidden by tasteless restoration, that it seemed as if nothing could make it a worthy and reverent building. It was, however, saved by Charles Kingsley who detected its hidden merits and persuaded Sir Charles Russell to restore it rather than to pull it down.

The village takes its name from the bird which Lord Ten-nyson described as "Nature's licensed vagabond," the swallow, and appears in old documents as *Swalfeld*, *Swalefeld*, *Solafel* and other forms. The drive from the gatehouse next to the village leads across the Blackwater river over which one of the owners of the estate, Governor Pitt, erected a beautiful bridge with five arches. On the top of the parapet he placed a sundial with his initials "T. P. 1722." Soon the house appears in view. It is a large quadrangular house and encloses an inner court which was formerly a complete cloister. Two sides of the quadrangle are much older than the rest of the house, the roof of these wings being screened with a parapet of baluster; one is surmounted by a belfry and the others by a clock-tower. When Sir Henry Russell bought Swallowfield in 1820 many alterations were made and some distressing vandalism was perpetrated. But I must say something about the successive owners of the place. Fuller quaintly observes that "the lands of Berkshire are very skittish, and often cast their riders, which yet I impute not so much to the unruliness of the Beasts as to the unskilfulness of the Riders. I desire heartily that hereafter the Berkshire gentry may be settled in their saddles, so that the sweet places in this county may not be subject to so many mutations." Swallowfield has certainly been no exception to this proverbial skittishness, and has had many owners from the time of Edward the Confessor to modern days. Those who would follow all these mutations cannot do better than to read Russell's admirable work on "Swallowfield and its owners." Its fascinating pages record all that concerns the old house and the many families who have held it. I cannot do more than mention a few of the illustrious personages who have been connected with it, from the time of Sexi, the Huscarle of the Confessor King to Lady Russell and her son Sir Charles, who now holds it. Sexi and other Saxon thanes were loyal to King Harold, and were dispossessed at the Conquest, and

Swallowfield was granted to the Conqueror's "dapifer" or steward, greatest friend and councillor, William Fitz Osbern. Amongst other owners have been the St. Johns of Stanton, the Despencers, Thomas de Colney. The park was used by Edward III for the breeding of horses. A large stud was kept there and vast sums spent upon their upkeep. He gave as much as a sum equivalent to £2,000 at the present time for a grey horse named "Pomers," and "Bayard," a bright brown bay, cost him about half that amount. The Earl of Warwick held the manor in chief. It became the dowry of Tudor queens and many notable names are connected with its history. Edward VI sold it to Christopher Lytcott, and it became the property of the Backhouses, whose monument is in the church, and then of Viscount Cornbury, afterward second Earl of Clarendon. It used to be said that the Earl of Clarendon wrote in this house *The History of the Great Rebellion*, but this appears not to be true. It was sold to Thomas Pitt, commonly called "Diamond" Pitt, or Governor Pitt, who made a great fortune in the East, and acquired the large diamond which will ever be associated with his name for £24,000. This possession caused no little anxiety and trouble. Lady Russell in her book tells the whole story of the stone. It was finally sold to the Duc d'Orleans for £125,000, receiving the name of "Regent," and after many vicissitudes is now in safe custody in the Louvre. I scarcely need mention the later owners of Swallowfield until it was acquired by Sir Henry Russell, Bart. He and his descendants have all been distinguished as soldiers or men of action, scholars and the friends of literary celebrities, members of parliament, etc. The late Sir George was a man whom every one loved and admired. No one worked harder than he. He was a barrister, Member for East Berks, a Deputy Lieutenant for the county, Governor of Wellington College, Chairman of the South Eastern Railway Company, County Court Judge, and in spite of all his cares always the kind, genial, courteous

friend whom we all admired. He married Constance, the daughter of the late Lord Arthur Lennox. She was the historian of Swallowfield, to whose work I have already acknowledged that I am indebted for all I know about her home. The old house has many charming family pictures by great painters, and a large library of books, which contains many treasures for the bibliophile. Not the least curious object is the magic crystal of the famous necromancer, astrologer and charlatan, Dr. Dee ; but the power of reading its mysteries is, I fear, lost.

A stroll through the village leads us to the hamlet of Riseley, and then on to Heckfield Common, one of the most beautiful in Northern Hants. It is beyond our borders, or I should like to describe the group of villages and interesting churches that lie in this district, Heckfield, Mattingley, Hartley Westpall and others. A few words must be said of Stratfieldsaye which is on the Berkshire border, the home of the great Duke of Wellington, presented to him by the nation for his signal services. The house is a plain building of little architectural interest, but profoundly interesting for its associations with the Duke. Some portions may have been built in the sixteenth century, but it has received so many additions and alterations that it is difficult to trace any early construction. In the time of Charles I the estate came into the possession of an ancestor of Lord Rivers, in whose family it remained until it was presented to the Duke. The house has many treasures. There are paintings of Marshall Schomberg, the hero of the Battle of the Boyne, Lord Wellington with his aide-de-camp, Lord Raglan, and their guides in their passage over the Pyrenees, of the Duke's triumphal entry into Madrid and other events in his military career ; busts of famous men, such as the Emperor Alexander, the Duke of York, Sir Walter Scott, and of Massena, one of Napoleon's generals ; a fine painting of the head of Copenhagen, the Duke's favourite charger, his accoutrements, etc., worn in his campaign. Some

of the relics of the old Roman city of Silchester are here, including one of the earliest mosaic pavements disinterred, forming the floor of the hall, and a bronze Roman eagle. There are portraits of great Spaniards, magnificently wrought keys of certain Spanish fortresses surrendered to the Duke, and almost everything in the house is an object of veneration to English people, telling of the mighty struggle of the nation a century ago.

Outside in the park we notice the avenue of Cornish elms, a mile in length, recalling the lines of the poet Rogers :

These are the groves a grateful people gave
For noblest service : and from age to age
May they to such as come with listening ear
Relate the story.

After the battle of Waterloo some beech trees were planted in the park and styled the Waterloo beeches. A story current in our neighbourhood is told of them which, as far as I am aware, has never been recorded in print. A lady named Miss F. Landen, desiring to sketch these trees, wrote to the Duke requesting permission to see the Waterloo beeches, and signing herself F. Landen. Whether her writing was difficult to read or the Duke's eyesight not quite so strong as it was, he read "beeches" as "breeches," and "Landen" as "London," and exclaimed, "Whatever does the Bishop of London mean by wanting to see my Waterloo breeches? Really his Lordship must be getting a little soft in the head." However the breeches were sent to the Bishop who was vastly astonished and said, "Whatever does the Duke mean by sending me these things? Really he must be suffering from softening of the brain!"

Across the park stands the curious church built of brick by Lord Rivers in 1874 in the shape of a Greek cross, with a west portico, a central octagonal tower crowned by a slated cupola. Its chief interest lies in its many monuments. There

are some early brasses to the memory of members of the Dabridgecourt family who held the estate in the sixteenth century, a memorial to a former rector, John Howsman, "who continued a paynfull Preacher by the space of forty-one years." Lest the reader should feel too much compassion for the inhabitants during so long a period, it may be stated that the word "painful preacher" were understood by our forefathers to mean a "painstaking" one. I regret that space does not permit us to record the rest of these monuments.

Over thirty years ago some friends of the writer rented for the summer the rectory of Stratfield Turgis, an adjoining village. They were anxious to discover some of the old people who personally remembered the great Duke. Their quest was vain, until one day an old man brought some eggs to the rectory. Here they thought was their opportunity. He was conducted into the drawing-room, and asked many questions. But our country people are very cautious folk, and do not like to be questioned by strangers. At length after many essays the old man volunteered the startling and novel information, "I'm told, ma'am, he were very good at war."

Before leaving this Berkshire border we must visit one village which has attained fame through the personal character and literary achievements of its rector, Charles Kingsley. That village is Eversley, which is easily approached from Stratfieldsaye by a road leading past the granite monument of the Duke, across Heckfield Heath, past the estate and mansion of Viscount Eversley, one of the most delightful drives or cycle rides imaginable.

Though more than forty years have flown since Charles Kingsley died, his memory is ever green. It is not difficult to discover the secret of his appeal to the affectionate regard of men of divers temperaments. Some disliked his type of churchmanship, and yet he won the friendship of Archbishop Benson. He was not an accurate historian or leading scien-

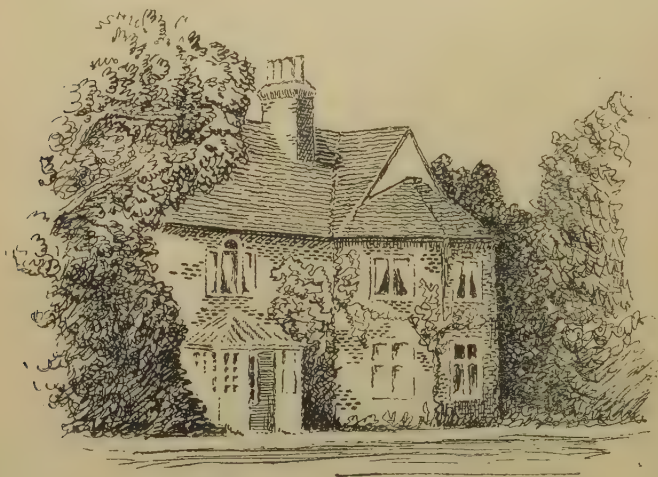
tist ; yet men derived inspiration and an enthusiastic love of lore and learning from his writings and opened the book of nature under his guidance, and found therein light and knowledge. Many know him only by his romances—and how stirring they are ! Who has not been moved by *Westward Ho !* and realized from a study of its pages the gallantry of the sea-dogs of Devon, their bravery, their sufferings and their triumphs ? Some call Kingsley a socialistic dreamer, and dislike his *Alton Locke* and *Two Years Ago*, and yet they proclaim him as the stalwart succourer of the oppressed, the lover of humanity, the champion of unpopular causes. However antagonistic his opponents were to his opinions, yet they all loved the man. He had a genius for friendship, and none revered him more than his parishioners. Even now the old people tell their stories about him and his curious ways and manners.

Pilgrims still come to visit Kingsley's beloved village, Eversley, which lies just beyond our Berkshire border in Northern Hampshire, and we will follow in their footsteps. The best way is to hasten back to Arborfield Cross whence a road conveys us direct to Eversley Bridge, across the Blackwater river, and straight on to the vicarage and church. The latter is a curious structure quite unlike any other church. The chancel is the only ancient part ; all the rest was rebuilt between 1724 and 1735, the tower being of the latter date. It was restored in 1863 and again in 1878 in memory of Charles Kingsley, who designed the paintings on the heavy classic chancel screen. In the church is a graceful modern effigy of Dame Marianne Cope, 1862, and a brass cross to the memory of Richard Pendilton, servant of Giles Dawbney, steward of Henry VII (1502). There are other memorials of the Cope family whose vault is beneath the chancel. In the dark south-west corner of the church is a tablet to the memory of John James who is described as the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Westminster Abbey, and fifty-four

churches in the City of London. One wonders where Sir Christopher Wren comes in, in this mighty claim !

After viewing the church the pilgrim walks along the short narrow path that connects God's Acre with the rectory garden, and admires the giant cedar which was Kingsley's delight. This view is described by him in a letter written to his future wife :

"The view is beautiful. The ground slopes upwards from the windows to a sunk fence and road without banks or hedges, and then rises in the furze hill in the drawing, which hill is perfectly beautiful in light and shade and colour. Behind the acacia in the lawn you get the first glimpse of the fir forests and moor, of which five-sixths of my parish consists. Those delicious self-sown first."



Eversley Rectory

By the courtesy of the present rector you may be able to see the old study, wherein the famous writer wrote his romances, his sermons, and prepared his lectures. Under the last rector, Mr. Mosley, it was much more luxurious than it was in Kingsley's time, with books galore and comfortable chairs

wherein it was pleasant to take one's ease. When I first saw it in the days of Kingsley's successor it was a bare room with a brick floor, but there was a high standing desk on which he wrote his inimitable stories on half sheets of note-paper, which when they had been covered with his close script, were scattered on the floor, and must have been with some difficulty sorted. Kingsley's old leaden tobacco-box and some other little relics have been handed down to posterity. He was very fond of smoking, and we still seem to see his familiar form, attired in very un-parsonic dress, with his knickerbockers and rough jacket, without even the customary white tie, walking with springing step over the heather-clad common, and suddenly darting into a furze-bush to seek for a long clay pipe that he had carefully hidden there, in case the lust for tobacco-smoking should suddenly come upon him without the wherewithal to gratify it. He had sundry of these hiding holes in various parts of his parish, where a pipe and 'baccy awaited him whenever he felt the need to use them. His eccentricities did but endear him to his many friends, and I could tell of many others.

He had a passionate love for his "Winter Garden," that great stretch of country through which you can ride fifteen miles on end, wherein flourish great Scotch firs, bright hollies with their scarlet beads, furze patches rich with its lacework of interwoven light and shade, and the deep soft heather carpet, which invites you to lie down and dream for hours; and behind all the wall of fir-stems, and the dark fir-roof with its jagged edges a mile long against the soft grey sky. He loved to ride through the fir-forests "with their endless vistas of smooth red green-veined shafts holding up the warm dark roof, lessening away into endless gloom, paved with rich brown fir-needle—a carpet at which nature had been at work for forty years. Red shafts, green roof, and here and there a pane of blue sky, while for incense I have the fresh healthy turpentine fragrance, far sweeter to my nostrils than the stifling narcotic odour which fills a Roman Catholic Cathedral."

Kingsley admired greatly the grand old moor, stretching its brown flats right away towards Windsor for many a mile, and the green wilderness of self-sown fir. "There they stand in thousands," he wrote, "the sturdy Scots, colonizing the desert in spite of frost, and gales, and barrenness; and clustering, too, as Scotsmen always do abroad, little and big, every one under his neighbour's lee, according to the good old proverb of their native land, 'Caw me, and I'll caw thee.'

"I respect these Scotch firs. I delight in their forms, from James I's gnarled giants up in Bramshill Park—the only place in England where a painter can learn what Scotch firs are—down to the little green pyramids which stand up out of the heather, triumphant over tyranny, and the strange woes of an untoward youth, seven years on an average have most of them spent in ineffectual efforts to become a foot high. Nibbled off by hares, trodden down by cattle, cut down by turf-parers, seeing hundreds of their brethren cut up and carried off in the turf-fuel they are as gnarled and stubbed near the ground as an old thorn-bush in a pasture. But they have conquered at last, and are growing away, eighteen inches a year, with fair green branches, silver-tipt, reclothing the wilderness with a vegetation which it has not seen—how many thousand years?"

I am not sure whether Kingsley was right. He thought the old Scotch firs disappeared from England with the glacial period, and were re-introduced, according to local tradition, by James I when he built the grand old house of Bramshill for his son Prince Henry, which we shall see presently. At any rate the firs are here. The winged seeds are carried by the south-west gales, and every seed takes root; and though thousands perish yearly, the eastern march goes on, up hill and down dale, covering the earth with a mantle of green. Such is the onward march of the firs which we love to watch in these days as much as Kingsley did. But the woodman's axe is laying heavy toll upon our forests. Owing to the war

ships can no longer bring to us the spoils of Norwegian woods, and we are obliged to help ourselves to our own native stock. So Canadian lumbermen, German prisoners and our own people are busily employed in cutting down these fir forests, and large tracts of country are as bare as barge-boards. But the heather will spring up again and the young firs seed and spread themselves, and there will be much planting, and nature will recover herself as England herself will do when the war is over, and we beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks. England like our fir forests has a wonderful capacity for recovery.

We pass with Kingsley through a gateway, out upon a village green, planted with rows of oaks, surrounded by trim sunny cottages, a pleasant oasis in the middle of the wilderness. A village cricket-ground where he used to play is in the centre. "We are great cricketers in these parts, and long may the good old game live among us," he wrote. Kingsley loved hunting, and was a keen follower of Sir John Cope's and Mr. Garth's hounds, though in his *Winter Garden* he represents himself as a spectator only on his way to read to some old women in his parish like the good clergyman he was. But I have my doubts as to whether he did not ride after those hounds, although he asserts that his hunting days were over. He owns that "in the days of my vanity I have 'frank delight of battle with my peers far on the ringing plains' of many a county, grass and forest, down and vale." And no one has expressed greater admiration for the hound or described him in better English, both in prose and verse, than Kingsley did.

"Look at that old hound who stands doubtful, looking up at his master for advice. Look at the severity, delicacy, lightness of every curve. His head is finer than a deer's; his hind legs tense as steel springs; his fore-legs straight as arrows; and yet see the depth of his chest, the sweep of loin, the breadth of paw, the mass of arm and thigh, and if you

have an eye for form, look at the absolute majesty of his attitude at this moment, majesty is the only word for it. If he were six feet high, instead of twenty-three inches, with what animal on earth could you compare him? Is it not a joy to see such a thing alive? It is to me, at least. I should like to have one in my study all day long, as I would have a statue or a picture, and when Mr. Morrell gave (as they say) two hundred guineas for Hercules alone, I believe the dog was well worth the money, only to look at."

A companion picture is that which he drew in his Ode to the brave North-Easter. The hounds seemed to have loved the poet-parson, and when the last day came, the day when he was buried in Eversley churchyard, the Garth Hunt was there, riders and hounds, to pay their homage to their departed friend.

Nor were they the only unaccustomed mourners at a graveside. In Kingsley's time there were many gipsy encampments on Eversley Common and in the district. These gipsies were very devoted to him, and called him their "Patrico-rai," or Priest-King, and Sir Charles Russell used to say that one of the most touching sights he had ever beheld was the grief of the vast concourse of gipsies who followed Kingsley to his grave. Eversley folk have become more civilized since his time. They were hethcroppers from time immemorial and poachers by instinct and heritage. They were descendants of many generations of broom-squires and deer-stealers, and the instinct of sport was strong within them, though no more of the king's deer were to be shot in the winter in the turnip fields, or caught by an apple-baited hook hung from an orchard bough. They limited their aspirations to hares and pheasants. Kingsley loved them, and they loved him. He describes the Eversley rustic as "a thorough good fellow, civil, contented, industrious, and often very handsome; and a far shrewder fellow too—owing to his dash of wild forest blood, from gipsy, highwayman and what not—than his bullet-headed, and

flaxen-polled cousin, the pure South-Saxon of the chalk downs. Dark-haired he is, ruddy, and tall of bone ; swaggering in his youth ; but when he grows old, a thorough gentleman, reserved, stately and courteous as a prince. Sixteen years have I lived with him, hail fellow well met, and never yet had a rude word or action from him."

Part II

BERKSHIRE HIGHWAYS
AND THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE

[illegible]

I

The Road to Reading

WE hasten back to Miss Mitford's early home at Three Mile Cross, and take the road to Reading. As the name of the hamlet implies it is a good three miles' walk or cycle ride to our county town. It is a road I know well. In the course of my clerical duties I have walked 2,000 miles along it, and used to know every stone, and house and man, woman and child and dog who lived there. Miss Mitford's company will be better than mine, so we will stroll with her along this road to the town she calls Belford Regis, which is none other than Reading. She wrote a very fascinating book called *Belford Regis*, which every one who loves glimpses of old-fashioned English life at the middle of the last century should read. It is full of her playful humour and gentle satire, a book that creates smiles and sometimes sighs. Here is her account of the approach to Reading and a picture of the town in her day :

" About three miles to the north of our village stands the good town of Belford Regis. The approach to it, straight as a dart, runs along a wide and populous turnpike road, all alive with carts and coaches, wagons and phaetons, horse-people and foot-people, sweeping rapidly or creeping lazily up and down the gentle undulations with which the surface of the country is varied ; and the borders, checkered by patches of common, rich with hedge-row timber, and sprinkled with cottages, and I grieve to say, with that cottage pest, the beer-house--and here and there enlivened by dwellings of more pretension and gentility--become more thickly inhabited as we draw nearer the metropolis of the county, to say nothing of the three cottages all in a row, with two

small houses attached, which a board affixed to one of them informs the passer-by is Two-mile Cross ; or of these opposite neighbours, the wheelwrights and the blacksmiths, about half a mile further ; or the little farm close by the pond ; or the series of buildings called the Long Row, terminating at the end next the road with an old-fashioned and most picturesque public-house with painted roofs, and benches at the door and round the large elm before it—benches which are generally filled by thirsty wayfarers and wagoners watering their horses, and partaking of a more generous liquor themselves.

“ Leaving these objects undescribed, no sooner do we get within a mile of the town than our approach is indicated by successive market gardens on either side, crowned, as we ascend the long hill on which the turnpike-gate stands, by an extensive nursery ground, gay with long beds of flowers, with trellised walks covered with creepers, with whole acres of flowering shrubs, and ranges of greenhouses, the glass glittering in the southern sun. Then the turnpike-gate, with its civil keeper, then another public-house, then the clear bright pond on the top of the hill, and then the row of small tenements, with here and there a more ambitious single cottage standing in its own pretty garden, which forms the usual gradation from the country to the town.

“ About this point, where one road, skirting the great pond and edged by small houses, diverges from the great southern entrance, and where two streets, meeting or parting, lead by separate ways down the steep hill to the centre of the town, stands a handsome mansion, surrounded by orchards and pleasure grounds, across which is perhaps to be seen the very best view of Belford, with its long ranges of modern buildings in the outskirts, mingled with picturesque old streets, the venerable towers of St. Stephen’s and St. Nicholas’, the light and tapering spire of St. John’s, the huge monastic ruins of the abbey, the massive walls of the county gaol, the great river winding along like a thread of silver, trees and gardens mingling amongst all, and the whole landscape environed and lightened by the drooping elms of the foreground, adding an illusive beauty to the picture by breaking the too formal outline, and veiling just exactly those parts which most require concealment.

“ Nobody can look at Belford from this point without feeling that it is a very English and very charming scene, and the impression does not diminish on farther acquaintance. We see at once the history of the place, that it is an antique borough town, which has recently been extended to nearly double its former size ; so that it unites in no common degree the old romantic, irregular structures in which our ancestors delighted, with the handsome and uniform buildings which are the fashion now a days. I suppose that people are right in their taste, and that the modern houses are pleasantest to live in, but, beyond all question, those antique streets are the prettiest to look at. The occasional blending too is good. Witness the striking piece of street scenery which was once accidentally forced upon my attention as I took shelter from a shower of rain in a shop about ten doors up the

right hand side of Friar Street—the old vicarage house of St. Nicholas embowered in greens, the lofty town hall and the handsome modern house of my friend Mr. Beauchamp, the fine church tower of St. Nicholas, the picturesque piazza underneath, the jutting corner of Friar Street, the old irregular shops in the market place, and the trees of the Forbury just peeping between, with all their varieties of light and shadow. I went to the door to see if the shower was over, was caught by its beauty, and stood looking at it in the sunshine long after the rain had ceased."

There have been many changes since Miss Mitford's time. The "Long Row" was an old tithe barn of Reading Abbey. The "Three Horse Shoes" is still there, but part of the barn which had been turned into tenements has been pulled down, and less sightly but more comfortable cottages erected. The market-gardens have been covered with cottages; the turnpike-gate with its civil keeper has gone, and the pond also, and the "handsome mansion" has vanished to give way to the dwellings of factory workers. Miss Mitford did not observe an interesting bit of old Reading, the conduit that supplied the abbey with water through pipes made out of hollowed trees. It stands close to Conduit Terrace. She gave fancy names to the churches. "St. Nicholas" is really St. Lawrence's Church, "St. Stephen's" is St. Mary's and "St. John's" stands for St. Giles's Church. Gone too is the picturesque piazza which stood on the south side of St. Lawrence's Church. Reading is a progressive town, a busy modern place, that fills the world with biscuits, that sends its seeds into all countries, that has iron-works and printing works and tin works, and is gay and prosperous except in war-time. It pulls down its old houses and builds greater. One of the last which called itself Walshingham House, after Queen Elizabeth's minister, an old half-timbered structure with charming old plaster ceilings, at the corner of Minster Street and Broad Street, disappeared a few years ago. We did our best to save it, but business and modern utilitarianism were too much for us,

The narrative of Reading's history would take too long. For there is a vast amount of history connected with it, though it looks so very modern. The market place has some old houses left and an old-fashioned monument in its centre to the memory of Charles Simeon. The three ancient churches are worth visiting, though they have been enlarged and restored somewhat drastically. The contrast between the modern St. Giles and the tumbledown little church shown in old prints is striking. One of the most interesting churches is Greyfriars, the actual preaching church of the ancient brethren who had their friary in the town. It has some good Decorated work, and has had many vicissitudes, having been used as a guildhall, a prison, and is now a church again. New churches have sprung up of varying degrees of excellence, and factories and workshops, and a new town hall that is more useful than beautiful, with an excellent library, museum and art gallery. The museum must not be overlooked. It contains the principal spoils of the excavations at Silchester, and the most complete collection of Roman antiquities in southern England, besides a valuable assemblage of the flint implements of prehistoric man.

But no modern "improvements" can rob Reading of its history. It had an abbey which was one of the most powerful and beautiful in this kingdom, with a magnificent minster as large as Westminster. It has nearly all vanished, this noble church. Let us examine what is left of these abbey buildings. At the north-east corner of the market-place stood the outer gate. This has been pulled down, but past the new shire hall and the assize courts stands the inner gate, restored indeed, but retaining its ancient features. We are in the Forbery and the Forbery Gardens with its fierce lion monument erected to the memory of the men of the Royal Berkshire Regiment who fell in the Battle of Mahwand, and its modern statue of King Henry I the founder of the abbey, constitute an attractive feature of modern

Reading. There is a mound on the north, sole remains of the defences raised when Reading was attacked in the Civil War and had to endure two sieges. We pass under a tunnel and find ourselves in the south transept of the great church, and see, covered with ivy, the stumps of the great piers that supported the lofty central tower. The walls have been stripped of their ashlar work and only the core remains, strong and solid. They have resisted the attack of pick and shovel and of gunpowder when plunderers came to cart the stones away. The ashlar work has gone to help to build portions of Windsor Castle.



Reading Abbey

We pass through the vestry and the slype, and are in the cloisters. On the left is the chapter house, a noble room it must have been with a single spanned roof. A doctor in Reading has placed there memorials of the first and last abbots, and a representation of the well-known song, "Sumer is i cumen in," composed in 1240 A.D. by a monk of Reading

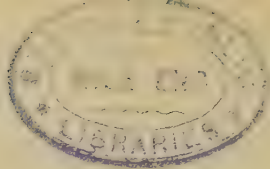
Abbey, the first English song with musical notes attached. You can see the remains of the seats where the monks sat, while at their feet are those of the novices. In this chamber Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, presented the keys of the Holy Sepulchre to King John, and bade him start upon a crusade to rescue Jerusalem from the infidels, a task that has been left to our modern British heroes successfully to accomplish. Here the marriage contract was signed between John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster, when there were great rejoicings, and tilts and tourneys took place daily. The occasion was celebrated by Chaucer in his poem, "The Dream." Parliaments have been held here and royal councils; and in 1625 when the plague raged in London Charles I came to Reading and the Michaelmas term of the courts of chancery, king's bench and common pleas was held here. Much history has been made within these battered walls.

A little further are the remains of the great dormitory of the monks with the rere-dorter, and the wall of the refectory, the roof of which may be seen over the nave of St. Mary's Church, whither it was taken when the monastery was pillaged. The wall owes its preservation to the kindly act of Queen Elizabeth, who built some cottages against it for the Flemish weavers who had fled to England from the cruelties of the Duke of Alva and his Spanish mercenaries, whose acts closely resembled the barbarities of the modern Huns.

The municipal history of Reading is full of matter. I have here four thick volumes of its records, its old guild life, its contests between the corporation and the abbots and monks, which diversified town life in mediæval times in many places, where a powerful abbot and a rising and ambitious borough contended together for their rights and privileges. It was a great centre of the cloth trade, and John Kendrick and others earned fame and fortune and left behind them benefactions for their poorer neighbours and townsfolk.

It would require a volume to record all the royal visits

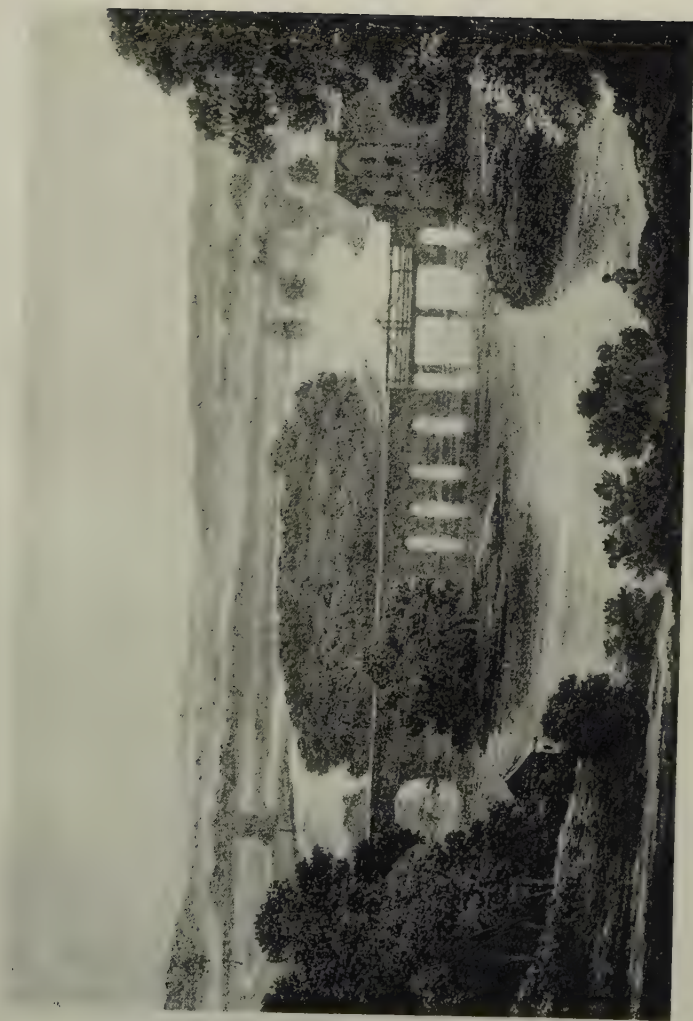
to Reading and the many stirring events that have occurred to the town, and our time is passing. The river is inviting, and we propose to continue our travels by one of the Thames steamers, or if you prefer it in a rowing boat, which will convey us to Streatley along some of the prettiest reaches of the river. So we make our way to East's boathouse by way of the Caversham Road, and proceed along our pilgrimage.



II

From Reading to Streatley by the Thames Highway

ON the opposite side of the river is Caversham in Oxfordshire, recently after many heart-burnings and contentions incorporated with Reading. Caversham House, the residence of the Crawshay family, occupies a splendid position on the hill overlooking the town of Reading. It was a little too splendid in the time of the Civil War, as the Earl of Essex, after driving over the Royalist garrison, placed his cannon there and bombarded the town, destroying several houses, wounding the governor, and causing its surrender. The present house was built by Earl Cadogan in 1718 and is higher and further from the river than its predecessor. The gardens were laid out by Capability Brown, who, according to his usual fashion, cut down the fine avenues to open the view. In 1795 Earl Cadogan sold it to Colonel Marsack, an Indian officer, and reputed son of George II, whose son sold it to Mr. Crawshay. The elder house and manor has had a long history and many distinguished owners, dating back to the Conquest. Amongst these was the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshall, Regent of the king and kingdom during the minority of Henry III, who died here in 1219, "a peerless and incomparable knight." He was succeeded by other members of his powerful family who all contributed to the making of English history. The descent of the manor is recorded in the Transactions of the Oxfordshire Archæological Society.



Caversham Bridge.



I may mention the names of Hugh Despencer, favourite of Edward II, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Richard Nevill, Earl of Warwick, "the king-maker." Its palmy days were in later Tudor times when Sir William Knolles entertained here Queen Elizabeth and "made great cheer and entertained her with many devices of singing, dancing and playing wenches and such like." In 1613 Anne of Denmark, consort of James I, was welcomed here on her way to Bath. The house is described as being a fair red-brick building, with some fine avenues of trees in front, all of which, as I have said, fell victims to Capability Brown's iconoclasm. One of these avenues was named after her, "Queen Anne's Walk." The Earl of Craven was living here in the time of Charles I, and here the king had a last interview with his children in 1647.

Caversham Bridge is also renowned in story. A view is shown of the ancient bridge that existed here before the present hideous iron structure was erected in 1870. The old bridge was very narrow and inconvenient: two vehicles could not pass each other. A sharp skirmish took place on this bridge and on the hill by the church, resulting in the defeat of the Royalist troops who were attempting to relieve Reading. That house on the bridge is a relic of a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, attached to the Abbey of Notley, wherein the offerings of the passengers were made to the priest in the charge of the chapel and devoted to its maintenance and to the repair of the bridge. The church has been much enlarged and restored. Some notable relics were preserved in the chapel of our Lady, the image of the Virgin plated with silver and adorned with a crown and jewels, "the blessyd Knyfe that Kyllled Seynt Edward, the dagger that kyllled Kinge Henry, schethe (sheath) and all, and a piece of the halter Judas hanged himself withall." The principal one that was most venerated was an "Angell with oon wing that browt to Caversham the spere hedde that percyd

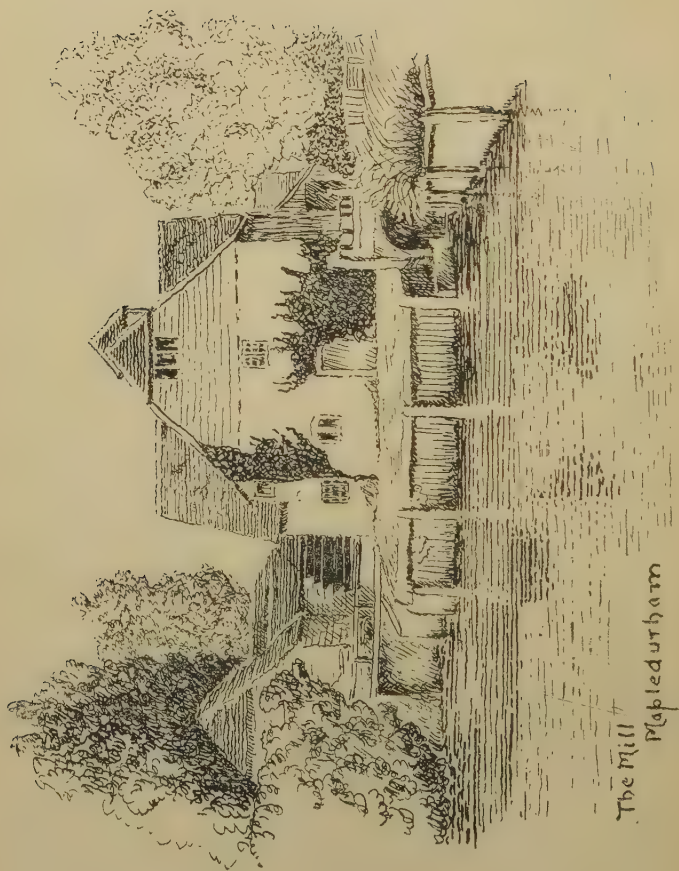
our Saviour his syde upon the crosse." Needless to say Dr. London, the base and unscrupulous commissioner of Henry VIII, who afterwards was condemned to ride on an ass with his face to the tail amidst the jeers of the populace, for his shameful peculations, made havoc of these relics of superstition.

The old rectory, which is in lay hands, is a charming old house with beautiful grounds and terraced walks sloping to the river and clipped yew hedges. It incorporates the old dwelling of the canons of Notley who owned the church, and it is stated that when the abbey was dissolved the house and rectory were given by Cardinal Wolsey to his rising college at Oxford. A mysterious ghost haunts the summer house in the garden, and the sister of the owner told me that she had heard the sound of a phantom boat approaching this summer house in the night and the plunge of a heavy body into the river. Some dark deed of olden days is doubtless involved in this weird mystery.

Proceeding up-stream we behold some of the richest scenery in the Thames Valley. Past the "Roebuck Inn," where the Oxford Eight used to train sometimes in the good old days before the sounds of war killed the splash of oars, we come to Purley on the Berkshire bank, surrounded by immemorial elms beneath the shadow of the woods of Purley Park. It was almost entirely rebuilt in 1870 except the fine brick tower which bears a shield of the arms of Bolingbroke. The font is Norman, and there used to be a curious piece of tapestry of the Story of Susannah; but a former rector sold it, as he did not consider the subject suitable for a church. Purley Hall stands some distance from the river and together with Sulham forms the estate of the Wilder family, who have held property there since the fifteenth century. Purley Hall was known as Hyde Hall and was built by Francis Hyde in 1609. About a century later Francis Hyde sold it to Francis Hawes, a director of the South Sea Company. It

was let to Warren Hastings during part of his trial. A quaint picture represents him riding near the Indian animals which Macaulay states he tried to acclimatise. A distinguished soldier who lost his commission during the present war, and gained it again by gallantry when fighting in the ranks, is living now at Purley Hall. It contains many most interesting family portraits.

Opposite Purley, where there is a lock and a large weir, stands Mapledurham. That weir and lock look peaceful enough on this bright summer's day ; but the river can surge and rage in winter, and a very tragic scene took place a few years ago when the rector of Purley crossed the water in a boat to help his neighbour on the other side, and on the return journey in the darkness of the night was carried over the weir and drowned. But the scene is calm and beautiful enough when the summer sun shines. Mapledurham House has been for centuries the seat of the Blount family. The front is Early Tudor and was attached to a much older building, a portion of which, of half-timbered work, remains in the south-west. This front consists of a curious wall 103 feet in length, with an entrance to the hall in the centre, flanked on each side by a wing twenty feet wide, the material being brick with stone groins and mullions. There are eight fine oriel windows transomed and mullioned. At the back are irregular buildings, amongst which is a small chapel for Roman Catholic services, the Blounts being adherents of that faith. The windows are all mullioned, the moulding being the usual ones of quarter circles and fillet. The house was garrisoned for the king during the Civil War by Sir Charles Blount, whom Clarendon called "the rout-general of the Royal army." In 1643, when Reading was besieged, the Parliamentarians captured the fort near the house which they plundered, and Sir Charles must have been a little gratified to learn that many of the troopers were hurt by the bursting of their own petard. Sir Charles, however, met with an unhappy



The Mill
Mapledurham

death. He was shot dead by a sentry at the north gate of Oxford, on June 1, 1644—either because he failed to give the watchword correctly, or because he advanced after the sentry had bidden him to stand.

The Blounts can trace their descent from Sir William le Blount who lived at Belton at the beginning of the twelfth century, and his descendant bought Mapledurham in 1502. Sir Richard Blount, whose portrait is in the house, built the present house about 1530. Pope was much attached to the two sisters, Martha and Theresa Blount. The vixenish Theresa scorned his youthful homage, but for many years he enjoyed the warm friendship of Mistress Martha, of whom he wrote when she left London for Mapledurham :

She went to plain-work and to purling brooks,
Old-fashioned halls, dull aunts and croaking rooks.

Two of his epistles were written to the " scornful beauty," who had " the brightest eyes of Britain," and he addressed a poem to Martha on her birthday. In the end she treated him with much unkindness, refusing to go to see him in his last illness. Perhaps, however, if we had Miss Martha's account of the matter, we should not judge her very harshly, as Pope must have been very trying at times. The portraits, including one of Queen Elizabeth ; the remarkable ceilings, not unlike those at Hardwick, and the tapestry, which has a curious history, are all interesting. A long avenue of elms leads to the house, and it is believed that if one of the trees fall, some misfortune will happen to the family. The gardens are a model of a true English pleasaunce, with its clipt yew hedges, cyprus trees and cedars, velvety lawns and walled enclosures.

In an old book, dated 1644, I find the following description of the house :

A gallant seate, a plentifulle bottome of brave meadowes, running by the Thames. A brave parke with lofty hills crowned with pleasant

copse woods, and about 300 acres of land within the pales. This faire and large howse is much spoyled by the fury of the rebellious, when the Earl of Essex lay at Reading, 1643. When they first came to plunder the howse they fixt a Peterard (petard) on the hall doore, which recoyled upon themselves and killed three of them.

It is difficult to leave so fair a home surrounded by a wealth of trees such as you will scarcely see anywhere else, and whose meadows are a carpet of gold when the buttercups are in bloom.

Close by is the church, a late Perpendicular building. It was formerly attached to the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy, but after alien priories were abolished by Henry V, this church was given to Eton College by his son Henry VI, founder of the same. The south aisle is the Blount chapel, and is separated from the rest of the church. It contains the fine brass of Sir Robert Bardolf (1390) mentioned in Haines's *Catalogue of Brasses*; it closely resembles a brass of Sir Robert de Grey at Rotherfield Greys, and evidently came from the same workshop. The altar tomb of Sir Richard Blount is interesting. The church was restored by Butterfield in 1863, when the alabaster reredos was set up and the roof of the chancel and the Norman font gaudily painted. In the Blount chapel there is some Italian painted glass dating from the end of the fourteenth century, a piscina, and an ancient fire-engine. The church has a fine golden chalice and paten, the gift of King William IV, whose son, Lord Augustus Fitz-Clarence was vicar here. There are in the village some old almshouses, built in 1613 by John Lister, a connexion of the Blounts, and an old picturesque mill, 200 years old, occupying the site of a mill that was there in the time of William the Conqueror.

A little further up the river the beautiful park of Hardwick House slopes down to the stream. It is an interesting house and has been greatly enlarged by Sir Charles Rose, the late owner. Its main portion is Elizabethan or Jacobean. In

one room Queen Elizabeth is said to have slept, and it has a ceiling of very elaborate panel work of beautiful pattern, consisting of heads in bas-relief. The four central panels bear the portraits of the Queen, and in the other four are the heads of Joshua, Julius Cæsar, Jeroboam—a singular selection—and one dissipated Fauna. It is, however, a masculine face with a full beard. The ancient owners took their name from the place, the De Hardwicks. In Queen Mary's time it was owned by Richard Lybbe, who was her "Sewer," i.e. the officer who arranged the royal table and more anciently called "dapifer," and until quite recent times it has remained in the family. Richard Lybbe in the time of the Civil War suffered much in his support of the king. He wrote: "Since which time by reason of this unnatural war, my house and studye being plundered by soldyers, among my many and great losses, I lost my accounts and many writings of great consernment." Much valuable plate was carried off, and the stirrups which Queen Mary used, and a bed worked by Mrs. Lybbe with velvet hangings. It was a sad house when the soldiers left. The diary of Mrs. Lybbe Powys in the eighteenth century has been published by Mrs. Climenson and throws wonderful light upon the doings of society in that period.

Near Hardwick there was an inn at Collyn's End, where on July 19, 1648, Charles I, then a prisoner at Caversham House, came to bowl on the green above the house, attended by a troop of Colonel Rossiter's horse. This little event was celebrated by the following lines which were afterwards affixed to the house:—

Stop, traveller—stop: within this peaceful shade
His favourite game the Royal Martyr play'd;
Deprived of honour, fortune, friends and rank,
Drank from the bowl, and bowl'd for what he drank;
Sought in a cheerful glass his cares to drown,
And changed a guinea, ere he lost a crown.

A little further we come to pretty Pangbourne, with its lovely weir where the big Thames trout love to lie. It is

spanned by a wooden bridge, to cross which, if you wish to get to Whitchurch, you must still pay toll. Prosperity has rather spoiled this pretty village, and it was shameful to build those hideous red-brick cottages with slate roofs to mar one of the prettiest hamlets on the Thames. The church has been rebuilt save its brick tower. It has some interesting monuments, especially that of Sir John Davis, one of Elizabeth's gallant sea-dogs who "scoured the Spanish main." He rests here, with his two wives, after many adventures, and after nearly losing his head through being involved in Essex's revellion. He lived at Bere Court, once the country seat of the Abbots of Reading.

Across the river is Whitchurch, which ought to be a happy place as it has little or no history. It is a fair sample of hundreds of villages throughout the country, whose annals are of value to the antiquary and historian, but of little interest to any one else. Canon Slater, a former rector, wrote a book about it and in it advances some few tokens of antiquity which may be of questionable accuracy, but his documentary history is sound enough, and we get a glimpse of the village in the days of its attachment to Abingdon Abbey in 1012, and when the Norman Conquerors had set their mark upon it. The present church is modern except the fifteenth century porch, the Norman doorway and font. Brass-rubbers will find here several objects for the exercise of their skill. There are brasses to the memory of Thomas Walysch and his wife, Roger Grery, a former rector, Peter Winder, curate, Thomas Percyvale, rector, and some monuments of the Lybbe family, whose acquaintance we have made at Hardwick.

On the left of the stream as we pass on are the gates of Basildon Park, the residence of the Morrison family. The present house was built by Sir Francis Sykes in 1767, and contains a splendid collection of works of art by great masters, which it is a privilege to inspect, as few houses possess greater

treasures. Proceeding onwards we notice the dense hanging woods of Basildon and a reach of the river that is most beautiful in every way, and can scarcely be surpassed. Goring is on the Oxfordshire side of the great river, while opposite to it is Streatley, the twin villages being connected by a long, white, wooden toll-bridge, which artists love to paint. Streatley has been styled the Mecca of landscape painters, and there are few prettier glimpses of Thames scenery than you can obtain when leaning on the rails of this bridge you see the thick woodlands about Cleeve Lock, the rich timbered meadows on the Berkshire bank, the trembling waters of the weirs, the little eyots cumbered with tall osiers. The roar of the waters sounds pleasant in your ears, and in the distance are the broad rolling hills. Near the bridge is a picturesque old mill, its walls stained by time, with steep gables and high-set dormers, the sheds of the boat-builders and timber yards.

On the Oxfordshire side is Goring, or Goring-on-Thames, to give it the addition these river-side villages love to claim.

The church is said to have been built about the year 1080, but the great part of it dates from 1154-89, the ivy-mantled grey square tower, with its round-headed window being evidently the most ancient part now standing. It has the unusual dedication of St. Thomas of Canterbury, commonly known as Thomas à Becket. The west doorway is a good specimen of Early Norman work, and some portions of it are believed to be Saxon. The Norman work reaches up to the belfry, above which, in the early part of the fourteenth century, an elevation was added, the original roof being raised about the same time. The first church was probably built by Robert D'Oyly, the lord of Wallingford Castle, and the nave is very much in its original Norman condition. At the restoration of 1885 the eastern apse was added, when it was found that the church had originally an apse, so that the restoration on the old foundations was a very happy one. An Augustinian nunnery founded in the reign of

Henry II was formerly attached to the church and suppressed at the dissolution of monasteries. Its remains were built into a farm-house. It fell into the hands of the Duke of Suffolk and then became the property of Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford. The cloisters were evidently on the south, as that wall of the church is without windows save in the clerestory. Some of the brasses are interesting, particularly one in Norman-French, dated 1370-80.

Crossing the bridge and admiring the picturesque weirs, which are roughly built with stone and stakes, overgrown with furzy vegetation and every English flower that blows, the water pouring foaming down numerous cascades, we come to Streatley, which has far-reaching memories. Ina, King of Wessex, gave a piece of land to the monastery at Abingdon, according to the chartulary of that Abbey, in the year 687 A.D. The manor was given to that monopoliser of English acres, Geoffrey de Mandeville. The church, pleasantly situated amongst a bower of trees, has been rebuilt in modern times with the exception of the tower. There is a brass to the memory of Elizabeth Osborn or Prout, 1440, and one to Thomas Buriton, 1603, who had eleven daughters and six sons. People had evidently large families in those days. There is a remarkable old bell which was removed to the schoolroom and has been sorely treated. It bears the inscription in fifteenth century characters :

Hæc in conclabe gabriel nunc pange suabe,

which may be translated "In this cell (or assembly) Gabriel now strikes sweetly." The bell is called "Gabriel," and was perhaps used for ringing the Angelus.

This picturesque village has a pleasant street and good old houses shaded by trees and is a haunt of ancient peace where it is good to rest ere we start upon our pilgrimage into the country of the Berkshire Downs. The "Swan Inn" on the river, or the "Bull" in the village, invite repose.

III

The Berkshire Down Country

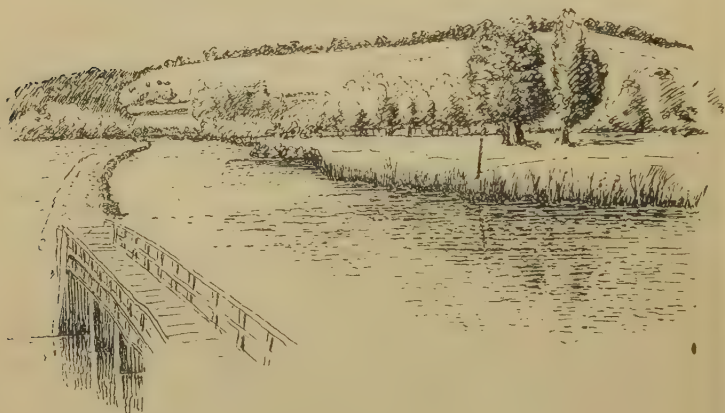
STREATLEY takes its name from the ancient Icknield Street, or the way of the Iceni, that wonderful road which traversed England from East Anglia to Bath and Devonshire. Along its course Celts, Romans, Saxons and Danes have travelled. It leads us to one of the most interesting districts in Berkshire, if not in England, great open tracts of rolling downs with magnificent views and panoramas. Camps and earthworks and tumuli abound, and somewhere on these heights King Alfred fought the Danes at the great Battle of Ascesdune, and the great White Horse looks down the Vale, and, as some suppose, marks the site of that ancient battlefield.

So we take the road again and will not be deterred by the lay of the lazy minstrel :

The air is clear, the day is fine,
The prospect is, I know, divine,
But most distinctly I decline
To climb the hill at Streatley.

Not following so notable an example I have often climbed that hill ; it is a good pull up, but it is worth the trouble. You would not find a fairer prospect. Along the summit of the Downs runs this old Icknield Way, which we Berkshire folk call the Ridgeway, or in the vernacular " the Rudge." At the foot of the hills is the Portway running through Wantage. The former is the most ancient road. In ancient

times the Vale was a marshy swamp with islands here and there. Miss Hayden calls her charming book describing these old-world villages "the Islands of the Vale." Traffic along the Vale was uncertain or impossible save perhaps in summer when the floods disappeared. So our primitive forefathers "took the highroad while we take the low road," as the Scots sing. But in Roman times when the Thames had carved a deeper channel and the soil of the Vale was drier, and as rich



Streatley Hill

as any land in England after its submersion, it was possible to take the low road, as we propose to do when we have feasted our eyes on the glories of this wondrous country. Of the Ridgeway, the late Mr. Vincent wrote so excellently that I cannot refrain from quoting his words :

"Of this Ridgeway, indeed, it may be said without much fear of contradiction that, saving only the rivers, and other ways passing over downs, it is and must be incomparably the oldest highway in the kingdom. It has been there always, from a human point of view. It needed no making and it has never been made by man. It was never masked with trees nor clogged by marshes. It offered itself on the obvious path from east to west and from west to east from the very

beginning of human time. It is, if the phrase may be permitted, God's own road that needs no mending, that cannot be improved ; and if it has rung with the clash of weapons, with the shouts of warriors from the days of the Atrebatas even until those of the Stuarts, it has also accomplished its purpose as a road of peace. For it will hardly be credited, but it is true, that there are men living in the Vale of the White Horse now who remember the days when coal came from South Wales along the Ridgeway by wagon, and the residents in the Vale sent their teams up to the Ridgeway to fetch it." ¹

Let us glance at some of these hills and camps and tumuli. There is Lowbery Hill crowned by an earthwork which Professor Atkinson has recently excavated, finding the remains of some Romano-British dwellings, and beneath the doorway a skeleton which he thinks was a human sacrifice offered to the gods to secure a blessing on the habitation. Then there is King's Standing Hill, where King Alfred is said to have stood or pitched his tent when he sought the Danes. Near Blewbury is Blewburton Hill and Church Knob, called also Scutchamore or Cuckhamsley Knob, where the Saxon missionary St. Birinus preached to Cynigils, King of Wessex, in the presence of Oswald, the Christian King of Northumbria, who was a suitor for the hand of the daughter of the Wessex monarch. So Cynigils became a Christian and St. Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester, just across the river in Oxfordshire, and Berin's Hill preserves the name of the saint.

The old roads was guarded all the way by earthen fortresses, Litcombe and Uffington Castles, Alfred's Castle and others. In Compton parish there is Perborough Castle on the top of the hill on Compton Cow Down. Some remains of primitive pit-dwellings have been found here, and the gateway was fortified by two towers built of Saxon stones. Badbury Hill Camp is in the far distance to the west in Great Coxwell

¹ This shows the ingenuity of the wagoners in those days who doubtless travelled by these old roads in order to avoid the turnpike gates. I have heard that the Welsh drovers used to bring thousands of sheep to Ilsley market and Welsh ponies to Berkshire fairs without paying a penny in tolls.

parish. To the north lies Cherbury Camp in Longworth. Hardwell Camp in Uffington may be noted. On these Downs there are two boundary ditches known as Grim's ditches, and traces of others, which were probably tribal boundaries attributed by some to the Belgic peoples and by others to the West Saxons.

Along the course of the Ridgeway Celtic and Saxon folk buried their dead and raised their barrows or tumuli. There is a group of these called "The Seven Barrows" on the Lambourn Downs, consisting really of about twenty, and there are others to be seen at East Ilsley, East Hendred, Letcombe Bassett, Nutwood Down, East Lockinge, Sparsholt, Woolston Down, known as Idlebush Barrow, Wantage and other places in this district. It will be gathered that this country is a Paradise for the industrious antiquary who can spend his time with pick and spade and shovel to delve for treasures and to reconstruct the past. We, however, are only pilgrims who must pass on and view the results of other men's labours. It is not for us to delve and dig and excavate ; but we can revel in the glorious views and recall what history we know of the struggle of Briton, Roman, Saxon and Dane in this delightful region.

South of where we are standing is Aldworth, the "old homestead," famous for its "giants," as the country folk used to call the wonderful series of monuments of the De la Beche family in the church. This family, who came over from Normandy after the Conquest, had a castle or fortified dwelling here at Aldworth, as they also had at Beames, near Swallowfield, and other property at Compton, Bradfield and Yattendon. They were a powerful race and have left their mark on the pages of history. No other church in England contains such a number of effigies of the members of the same family as Aldworth. There are three effigies of knights under richly carved canopies in the north wall of the nave, three under similar canopies in the south wall of the south aisle,

and two large table tombs with effigies under the two eastern arches of the arcade between the nave and the aisles. These canopies are very beautiful, crocketed, ogeeheaded, and a profusion of small roses on the tracery. They are an admirable example of the workmanship of the late Decorated period, or about the date 1350. They have been much restored. The Parliamentary soldiers damaged and broke them sadly, and they had to be extensively renewed in the restoration of 1871. Though they represent several generations of the De la Beche family, they were all erected at the same time, probably by the last direct representative Edmund, a very militant Archdeacon of Berkshire, who took part in a riot at Abingdon and other disturbances; and there used to be a brass of an ecclesiastic which doubtless was his memorial. There was also an effigy within an arch in the exterior south wall. This was supposed by the country folk to be "John Ever-Afraid," who gave his soul to the devil if ever he was buried in the church or churchyard; so he was buried under the covering-wall under the arch. The rustics used to say that four of the "giants" were named John, and they gave them the names, John Long, John Strong, John Ever-Afraid, and John Never-Afraid.

Amongst the many visitors who have made a pilgrimage to this church was a certain Colonel Symonds who was serving in the Royalist Army in the Civil War. He was a devoted antiquary, and made notes on what he saw during his campaigning. His diary is preserved in the British Museum, and his notes are very valuable.¹ He could not identify the effigies. Unfortunately Queen Elizabeth had been before him. She rode on a pillion behind her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, from Ewelme, and was shown a parchment containing the genealogy of the De la Beches, and the identity

¹ Printed in an article by Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., in the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*, Vol. xxi. p. 104.

of the effigies. After this visit the genealogy disappeared, and we can only conjecture who the knights and their ladies really were who are represented here. If you would read the riddle aright you must begin at the west end of the north side of the nave, follow the south wall of the aisle and conclude with the two central tombs. The following is probably the best conjecture :

1. Sir Robert De la Beche, knighted by Edward I in 1278.
2. Sir John De la Beche, the son of the former.
3. Sir Philip De la Beche, eldest son of Sir John, Sheriff of Berks and Wilts, who took an active part in the troublous times of Edward II, was deprived of his lands, but pardoned and restored by Edward III. This effigy, Mr. Keyser states, is one of the finest in England.
4. Philip De la Beche, the second son of the above.
5. Isabella, the wife of Sir Philip, whose seal was found in 1871 on which are the arms of Zouch, showing that she was a member of that important family.
6. John De la Beche, who died young.
7. Sir Nicholas De la Beche, the third son of the first Sir Philip, died 1348. He was Constable of the Tower and guardian of the young princes, sons of Edward III. Unfortunately the King paid a surprise visit to the Tower and found the guardian of his sons absent. Hence he was in prison for a short time, but soon recovered the royal favour.
8. Sir John De la Beche, the eldest son of the first Sir Philip and Isabella his wife. He fought for the Earl of Lancaster and was imprisoned in the Tower in 1322, being released five years later, and soon after died, leaving a widow and two sons.

Such is the wonderful series of knightly effigies. They furnish good subjects for the study of armour, but it is a sad pity that they fell victims to the insensate madness and fana-

tical violence of the wild rebels. The poor vicar in those days, Mr. Grace, was so overwhelmed by the sight of his plundered and devastated church that he resigned his living.

We may just look at the casket in which these jewels are stored. There is a west-tower with conical cap which with the nave was built in the early part of the thirteenth century. The chancel is a century later, about 1315, and the south aisle about 1340. The windows generally correspond with these dates, save that the east window is modern and poor. The piscina is interesting. The good Jacobean pulpit came from St. Lawrence's church, Reading, having been discarded when the vicar and churchwardens erected a hideous three-decker. Doubtless the present ones would like to receive it back again. The vicar of Aldworth, who has just resigned, found some excellent seventeenth century panelling in a farmhouse, and this he worked up into a very satisfactory reading desk. The bench-ends, showing a Tudor rose, lion and serpents, and eagle, are worthy of notice. In the vestry is a curious carved head of our Lord, probably part of a reredos ; it was found walled up in the western part of the church. In the churchyard there is a magnificent yew tree, one of the finest in England. It is twenty-eight feet in girth when measured four feet from the ground. Its bark has mainly gone, but it still contrives to grow, and is probably the oldest yew in England. It is far older than the present church.

We might continue our ramble along the Downs through East Ilsley, West Ilsley, Farnborough, past Woolley Park, the residence of the widow of the late Mr. Philip Wrongston, the best of squires and M.P. for this part of the county ; and hence through Fawley to Lambourn, famous for its noble church and racing stables. Or from Farnborough we might strike north-west to Wantage whither we are bound. I should like to describe the extraordinary sheep fairs that take place at East Ilsley, when as many as 80,000 sheep have been brought there. You will have heard of the old rhyme :

Ilisley, remote amidst the Berkshire downs,
Claims these distinctions o'er her sister towns ;
Far-famed for sheep and wool, though not for spinners,
For sportsmen, doctors, publicans and sinners.

There is much to be said about all these villages. At West Ilisley lived the notorious Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalarto. You may well wonder how such an ecclesiastic came to be vicar of this outlandish parish. I have sketched his life elsewhere. Let it suffice to say that he professed leanings towards the Church of England and doubts about the truths of Roman Catholicism. King James was delighted, welcomed him with open arms, made him Canon of Windsor and vicar of this place. The fat bishop made a sensation in London. Crowds flocked to hear him preach. But he was only a greedy time-server ; and when he was refused further preferment, he thought that perhaps the loaves and fishes of Rome would be better than any he could pick up in this country. So he went back to Rome. The Pope was enraged at his conduct, put him into the prison of St. Angelo, where he died suddenly, not without the suspicion of poison.

IV

From Streatley to Wantage

NOT to be drawn away from our line of way, we will hie us back to Streatley and start afresh along the road in the valley, along which line there are many delectable villages. The first on our right is Aston Tirrold (the "East town" owned by some family named Tirrold or Thorold). The chief feature of the fine old church is a Saxon doorway in the north wall of the north aisle, and in this is placed an ancient grave slab ornamented with a floriated cross. There were two manors in this parish owned by alien monasteries, one by the Abbey of Noyon and the other by that of Pratell in Normandy. The first was granted, after the suppression of alien priories, to the De la Poles, Dukes of Suffolk, who held Ewelme. Aston Upthorpe lies near, and in its much restored church there is a Norman tub-shaped font and in the vestry a Norman stoup. Some authorities seem to think that it was near these Astons that the battle of Ascesdunc, fought by Alfred and his brother Ethelred against the Danes, took place. Tradition says that Ethelred before the battle heard mass before going to face his foes. Antiquaries and historians have fought over the question of the site of this famous victory as fiercely as the English fought the Danes, and after all their discussions there is no certitude with regard to the solution of the problem. The traditional view is, of course, that the battle was fought where the White Horse looks down the vale, and that Alfred's men after the victory,



Stinoudon from the Thames

set to work to carve out the figure of the horse to commemorate the event. There are many arguments against that theory. The wise Alfred was not so foolish as to set his men a gigantic task of digging when he ought to have been pursuing the retreating hosts and making victory doubly sure. All that we can say is that somewhere on these downs the mighty victory was gained, which gave to England a time of peace and saved Christianity from destruction at the hands of the Pagans.

The next village is Blewbury, a very ancient place. King Edmund, in the tenth century in his charter, granting some land to Ælfric, which the latter gave to the monks of Abingdon, described it as *loco venerabili, antiquitus at adhuc cognomine noto, Bleoburg appellato*. It was a royal manor, as Domesday records, and was granted by the Empress Matilda in 1141 to Reading Abbey, and it can be traced through its various owners to Lady Wantage, who now holds it. Besides this great manor there were two smaller manors, one of which constituted the prebend of Blewbury in the Cathedral Church of Sarum, and the other was known as Nottingham's Fee from a family of that name.

The church is particularly interesting. It was originally Saxon. The Normans rebuilt it, erecting a large nave and a small sanctuary. Then in the latter part of the twelfth century they enlarged it, pulling down the chancel and erecting a central tower with transepts and a large new chancel. This was probably done by the Reading monks, to whom the Empress had just then given the manor. Then in the thirteenth century the south aisle was added and in the fourteenth the north aisle was built and the chapel at the east of the south aisle. Still the good people of Blewbury, or the Reading monks, were anxious to improve further the church. So in the Perpendicular period they raised the fine western tower, finishing it with a pierced parapet of quatrefoils and crocketed pinnacles at the angles, carrying vanes.

This tower is very similar to one that we shall see presently at East Hendred. They added also two porches ; the northern one has been spoilt by restoration, but the southern one remains a fine example of mediæval timber work. The door is new, but the restorers have happily retained the old iron-work.

The interior is as worthy as the exterior, and abounds in interest. We see the massive pillars of the central tower with a vaulted ceiling and a room above, though the tower itself has vanished. The roodloft stair remains, and in the chancel are the remains of a Perpendicular screen and some desks of the same period, upon which are chained Erasmus's *Paraphrase of the New Testament* (1548), Bishop Jewell's *Defence of the Apology of the Church of England* (1567), and an old Bible of 1613. The font is Perpendicular ; there are some old tiles, and some unfortunate new ones, fragments of old glass, some good brasses, two squints, a ring that was once used for the Lenten veil that hid the altar during that season ; a fine church chart of fourteenth century date, a stone effigy of the same period, and six melodious bells, the oldest of which dates back to 1586 and was cast by Joseph Carter. Mr. W. H. Richardson, F.S.A., in his account of the church, published in the *Transactions of the Newbury and District Field Club*, gives the information supplied by an old inhabitant, that when the tenor bell was brought home in 1825, it was turned up and filled with ale and " every one who liked dipped a drink out of it."

Such is the description of this grand old church, so full of architectural beauties and fascinating details. But in the village also there is much to admire. Artists have discovered its attractions. Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., painted here his famous picture of " The Village Wedding," and immortalized some of the villagers, and others have followed in his steps. There are some grand old seventeenth century houses with gables and tiled roofs and thatched cottages. John Wesley visited the village thrice and preached to large congregations,

and on a winter's day in 1750, when he had ridden from Reading his hands and feet were so cold that "he could scarce feel."

There are several inns here, as the village lies upon the important road on which we are travelling, and coaches used to run through the village from London to Wantage. One of these bears the sign of "The Load of Mischief," similar to one in London, representing a poor man carrying his drunken wife on his shoulders. The original signboard representing the "Load of Mischief" was designed by Hogarth for an inn in Oxford Street, London. Needless to say, the signboard painted by him and even the name of the inn, have disappeared from that busy thoroughfare; but the quaint device must have been extensively copied by country sign-painters. There is a "Mischief" at Wallingford, another at Norwich, and also at Madingley Road, one mile from Cambridge. This last exhibits the sign in its original form. The colours are faded by the weather; but traces of Hogarthian humour can be detected. The man is staggering under the weight of a woman whom he is carrying on his back. She is holding a glass of gin. There is a chain with a padlock round the man's neck, inscribed "Wedlock." On the right hand side is the shop of "S. Gripe, Pawnbroker," and a carpenter is just going in to pledge his tools. The sign preaches a useful sermon, the teaching of which is fairly obvious.

A gruesome story of one of these Blewbury inns was told to me about forty years ago. It was a lonely place in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and travellers sometimes disappeared, and innkeepers were not always good-hearted Bonifaces. In the paddock of this inn about forty years ago a tree blew down, and when its roots were grubbed up "a skeleton form lay mouldering there," around which the roots were entwined. A similar discovery was made beneath a neighbouring tree, and village tongues began to

wag and every one wondered how these bodies came to be buried in this curious fashion. At last "the oldest inhabitant" told how that in the days of his youth the landlord, who was a surly ruffian, was suspected of robbing and killing his guests; but no one could accuse him as no bodies were ever found. But he was observed to be fond of arboriculture. He planted many trees in his paddock, and if all these were cut down and grubbed up, doubtless the body of a slain traveller would be found under each one of them!

The next village, Upton, contains a very charming little early Norman church, and consists of a simple nave with a small sanctuary, somewhat based upon this Celtic model. The north and south doorways are both early Norman, with zigzag mouldings. It is worth while turning off the road just a short step to see this. It is curious that few of the Vale villages are actually on the road. They are nearly always just a little to the right or left. Probably the inhabitants sought safety in this way. Travellers along the road were not always to be trusted. Robber bands or lawless troopers frequented the highway. Hence to be a little retiring was thought to be advisable. But whatever may have been the reason these villages are in nearly all cases planted just off the highway.

There is not much to be seen at West Hagbourne, but about a mile from it, further away is East Hagbourne, one of the prettiest villages in Berkshire, and one which ought not to be missed. It takes its name from the brook, running through it, Hacca-broc, now called Hacker's Brook, and has some fine old timber houses which artists love to sketch. It has a large village cross near the church, a second in the hamlet of Crosscot, and a third between the main village and hamlet in the hedge. Mr. Keyser in his account of the church states that these crosses have given rise to the tradition that Hagbourne, within the limit marked out by them, was a place of sanctuary, and that an ancient knocker on the church door



East Hagbourne

was used to enable a fugitive to claim refuge in the church.¹ He also truly states that this church is a very fine and interesting one. It consists of a west tower, nave, aisles, with north and south porches, chancel and chancel chapels. The earliest remaining portion is the south nave arcade, which is of late Transitional Norman date of quite the end of the twelfth century. The chancel seems to have been rebuilt about thirty years later, and a chapel added on the south side. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the north arcade of the nave and the aisle and north chancel chapel were added. Then, as we are informed by two brasses, the south aisle and south chapel were partly rebuilt and enlarged early in the fifteenth century, and towards the end of that century, the east window was inserted, the fine west tower erected, the roof raised and a clerestory added both in the nave and chancel, and the north and south porches built, though they have been much altered in more recent times.

Such is the general architectural description of the building, but its real interest lies in an extraordinary number of details. To the casual observer most churches are alike, but in reality no two are the same. Each has its own beauty, its own distinctive merit. This Hagbourne church has several peculiar features, and I have only space to dwell on a few of these, and would refer the expert and the curious to the excellent article which I have already named. In the chancel we notice the noble Perpendicular window which has five lights and is very elaborate, its fragments of old glass—alas! for the iconoclastic zeal that has destroyed so much! its pavement tiles of a light brown colour, its single Early English lancets. There is an aumbry where the sacred vessels were kept, and a rounded trefoiled arched piscina. Carved heads forming corbels look down upon us, and we can study the brass memorials of departed worthies. One dated 1627 records the whole family of the Keates. It is

¹ *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*, Vol. 18, p. 97.

interesting to trace the workmanship of the same mason or school of masons in various churches. Look at that rich conventional stiff-leaved foliage carved on the capital of the massive circular column dividing the chancel from the south chapel. It is very similar to the work we find at North Moreton, Long Wittenham and Steventon in this neighbourhood. Those grooves on the capitals show that formerly there was a screen dividing the chancel from the aisle, which was enlarged by Mistress Claricia Wyndesore, whose family once held the manor of West Hagbourne. In the north chancel aisle the vestry is screened off by some old linen pattern panelling. The east window has some old glass, and you can see three angels swinging censers, and in the north is a very interesting representation of the Nativity, and also of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. A piscina in both these aisles shows the position of altars. An anchor, with a star over each fluke is carved in the wall. This is the symbol of St. Clement, and may indicate that this chapel was dedicated to him. A curious feature of the western column of the nave is a chrismatory arch, a recess cut out of the capital for the cruet containing oil. The font is fine later Perpendicular work. The wooden pulpit belongs to the same period, and is much earlier than the usual Jacobean pulpits that are found in so many churches.

Every part of the church is worthy of close examination. Look at the splendid fifteenth century roof. On the centre beam is carved a hunting scene, hounds chasing stags. In Berkshire we were very fond of hunting, and representations of the sport find their way into our churches. The church at Lambourn, which has been for centuries a home of coursing, has some carvings of dogs hunting hares. There are memorial brasses of John York and Johanna his wife (1445), of another John York (*fundatoris ciste' Ile* (the founder of this aisle), 1416, and of Claricia Wyndesore, the lady of West Hagbourne, and of her husband John York, who built the

south chapel (1403). A picture on the west wall shows David playing the harp, with the text "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." On the outside we see many curiously carved figures, the ironwork of the doors, the quaint little sanctuary knocker, and the grand west tower built of a rich green-coloured stone. It is embattled and there is a charming little sanctus bell-cote with open sides and spirelet, and still containing its bell which used to sound forth to tell the villagers when the holy mysteries were being celebrated and to invite to worship. Mr. Keyser says that this tower is one of the best specimens of late fifteenth century work in the county, and that the admirable old bells that sound in it have the reputation of being one of the finest and most harmonious peals in the diocese of Oxford.

Returning to our highway and proceeding about a mile along its course we come to another picturesque village, Harwell. To see it at its best you should go there when the cherry trees are white with bloom or when the branches hang down with their weight of luscious fruit. It has many charming houses, but little history. That powerful personage, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, King of the Romans, and half-brother of Henry III, held the manor in the thirteenth century, and subsequently it passed to Sir Nicholas De la Beche, whose effigy we have seen in Aldworth church. The church is one of the finest in the county. It is mainly Early English work, though the Norman font speaks of an earlier building and the nave arcades are Transitional Norman. The chancel was rebuilt in the fourteenth century, and during the fifteenth the battlements and top of the tower were added. The masons of olden days delighted to add to their structural work quaint carvings and sculptures. Harwell church has several of them. Heads of bishops, monks, and females, look out upon us on all sides, and some are very curious. There is a quaint carving of a young man squatting down on a stringcourse with his right hand raised to his cheek and his

left hand holding a jug. Possibly he is suffering from tooth-ache, and is trying to cure it with a mug of ale. There is a figure of a hooded person, monk or lady, with a dragon biting his or her arm, and another figure is that of a man, curled up, with his right hand held up to his ear, while a large dragon is biting his arm. The dragon probably is intended to represent Satan or sin wounding his victim.

Some old glass remains. In the noble east window are the arms of Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward II. You will notice the piscina and sedilia, and the roof of nave and chancel with their king-posts. The communion rails were erected in Jacobean times, and beneath the altar is preserved the original stone altar-slab with its five crosses inscribed upon it. The late brass erected to the memory of John Jennens, or Jennings, whose family owned the great tithes, should be noted. He died in 1599, leaving six sons and five daughters, and to these he left also this valuable advice :

Good wife and children agree
Serve God and come to mee.

“The best-laid schemes of mice and men oft gang agley.” This was the case with the benefaction of Christopher Elderfield, a native of Harwell in the early part of the seventeenth century, and an eminent divine, who, according to a tablet under the tower, “gave lands for the purpose of purchasing in the spring of every year two milch cows to be given to the poorest men in the parish of Harwell (burthened with families) for their sustentation.” This was a delightful bequest for the poor folk of the village, but unfortunately no pasture could be found for the animals as the land is chiefly arable. So the trustees do their best by purchasing the two cows or oxen, killing them and distributing the meat among the poor.

In the churchyard there is the base of the old cross which Puritan hands have destroyed, and other fragments of ancient

masonry are stored in the vicarage garden, including an early holy water stoop.

Another two miles' tramp along the main road takes us to a very interesting village, East Hendred, or Henrēth,



which has the pleasant meaning of "the rill of the water-hens." It is situate on the banks of rippling Ginge stream where these attractive birds still make their nests and sport in the waters. Few villages have such an interesting record as East Hendred. It was a market town in olden days and a great centre of the cloth trade. Clothier merchants lived within its borders, as their memorials in the church testify; and near the church are some traces of terraces where they used to dry their cloths; and there was a piece of land known as "Fulling Mill Mere." A record shows that there were fulling mills in the parish in the time of Henry VIII. In order to do complete justice to this delightful village I

should require to write a volume. I can only here epitomize its treasures.

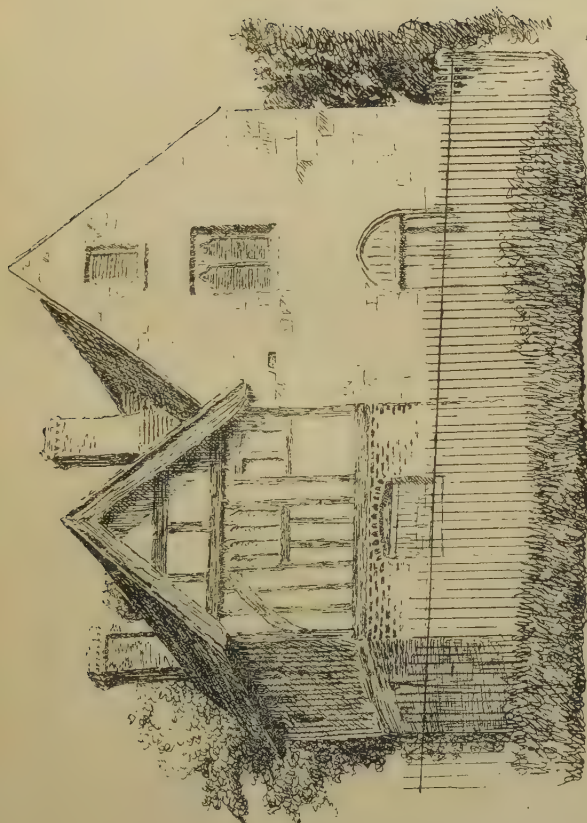
From time immemorial there has been five separate manors, four of which have at different times belonged to religious houses. They are known by the names of Abbey Manor, having been owned by Reading Abbey ; New College Manor, formerly granted to Littlemore Priory and then given to New College ; Frampton Manor, given by the Conqueror to his St. Stephen's monastery at Caen in Normandy ; King's Manor which belonged to the alien priory of Noyon in Normandy and, when alien priories were suppressed by Henry V, to the Carthusian Monastery of Jesus of Bethlehem at Sheen in Surrey, and the Manor of Arches, named after a former owner, William de Arches. At the beginning of the twelfth century this manor was held by the Turbeviles. By the marriage of an heiress it passed to the de Arches. Again by the marriage of another heiress, Maud de Arches, it passed to John Stowe whose name appears among the Berkshire gentry of 1433. His daughter and heir, Isabel, brought the manor by marriage to William Eyston, who thus acquired the property in the reign of Henry VI, and from him it has descended in an uninterrupted succession of male heirs to the present proprietor. The Eystons are the oldest family in Berkshire, and their lands have not been so "skittish" as Fuller said were most of our Berkshire manors. Indeed Mr. Eyston can not only trace his descent from William Eyston in the fifteenth century, but also through females back to the Turbeviles of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. A very goodly record.

In 1824 Mr. William Nelson Clarke published a valuable treatise on "the Parochial Topography of the Hundred of Wanting" (Wantage). I am fortunate to possess a rare copy of this quarto volume, bearing his own name, written by himself with his family motto, *Absit ut glorier nisi in cruce*. This Hundred includes East Hendred and records

all the illustrious names which have been connected with the place, its former owners and much else.

On entering Hendred we see on the left the very interesting remains of the chapel of Jesus of Bethlehem which was attached to the Carthusian monastery at Sheen. The building was reared by the monks in the second half of the fifteenth century, soon after the king's manor was granted to them. The people call it Champ's Chapel, probably from the name of some subsequent tenant. It consists of two storeys, but the eastern end is open to the roof, and divided off by a screen. Although the chapel has been used for secular purposes for a long period, sometimes as a barn or storehouse, the remains of its ecclesiastical use are evident. The windows are Perpendicular, and you can see the aumbry wherein the sacred vessels were kept, brackets on which images stood, and adjoining it are the remains of the priest's quarters now converted into cottages. It is of half-timber construction with a fine gable and barge-boards. The building is now in the possession of Mr. Eyston, who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, and he purposes to restore it to some religious use. I have visited the old farmhouse on the opposite side of the road, and was told that it also was connected with a monastery. It is early Tudor with mullioned windows and fifteenth century door.

Then we pass to the most interesting of all these architectural gems, the manor house of the Eystons, Hendred House, to which is attached a thirteenth century chapel, called the chantry of St. Amand and St. John the Baptist. In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1291 it was rated at £3 6s. 8d. annually. On the dissolution of chantries in 1547 it was dispoiled of its revenues; but since its foundation in the thirteenth century by a Papal Bull, Roman Catholic services have never ceased to be held within its walls. There are only two others in England which can claim a like distinction, that of the Stonors in Oxfordshire, and Hazlewood in York-



51

Champs Chapel, East Hendred

shire. The building is plain, with walls of great thickness. Here are preserved some treasures. In a window may be seen the initials of Hugh Faringdon, the last abbot of Reading, who was hanged at the gate of his monastery. There is preserved in the vestry the monumental stone coffin-lid of Hieronimus Robertus, first Prior of Poughley Prior in Chaddleworth parish, of the date 1160. This was a priory of Augustinian canons and has almost entirely disappeared. There is also the effigy of another prior.

The chapel had one disastrous episode in its usually uneventful and peaceful existence. During the march of the forces of the Prince of Orange to win for him the throne of his father-in-law the soldiers unfortunately came to East Hendred and profaned and plundered this chapel, broke the lamp that was always kept burning upon the altar, took away the sanctus bell, "supped out of the chalice and taking some of the church stuffe with them to Oxford, dressed up a mawkin in it, and set it up on the top of a bonfire."

Sir Thomas More, the victim of Henry VIII, was an ancestor of the Eystons, and they have preserved several relics of him. There is his portrait by Holbein, and also one of his large family group, of which there are four other examples. Here some barbarous hand has cut out the portrait of Lady More, as the picture was too large for its place in a house in Yorkshire, formerly belonging to the Eystons. There is also a portrait of Cardinal Pole and the walking-stick of Bishop Fisher which he used when he ascended the scaffold at the Tower, and More's drinking-cup. Part of the manor house is a low ancient building, to which several fine rooms have been added principally by Mr. Charles Eyston, who was the squire a century ago. On the front of the house is the monogram of the Jesuits, the *cor transfixum gladio*. There is a colony of Roman Catholics at Hendred and a new chapel has been built for their accommodation.

The parish church is remarkably fine. The west tower

with its open work parapet is fifteenth century work and very similar to that which we have seen at Harwell, probably built by the same masons. To the same date belongs the Eyston chapel. The oldest parts of the church may belong to the twelfth century. The nave arcades are Early English in character, and in the fourteenth century the clerestory windows were added. There is a Jacobean pulpit, an Early English font and a fifteenth century screen; some remains of old glass exist. The most interesting object in the church is the ancient lectern, one of the earliest in England. It is of thirteenth century workmanship. The stand is formed of a mailed foot with three dragons' heads. There is also a carved figure of stone that is a little earlier. The beautiful piscina, the carved heads and other objects, show that there must have been a school of carvers in East Hendred in the thirteenth century who accomplished all this fine work. The clock in the tower is very ancient and is said to be one of the oldest in the country, and one of the bells, of which there are six, is mediæval and is dedicated to St. Anne.

There are many monuments in the church. Those that tell of the former trade of the place are to the memory of two merchants, Henry and Roger Eldysley, *quandam mercatores isti ville* (1439), and that of William Whitwey, *pannarius et lanarius* (1479). There are many monuments of the Eyston family with their arms and quarterings and of former rectors. The church was restored somewhat drastically in the 'sixties, when a future Archdeacon of Berkshire was appointed rector. Old graves were disturbed, and this so enraged some of the old people that they threatened the rector's life. I have been told that one old man sat with a loaded gun at his cottage door ready to shoot him whenever he appeared in the village.

Half a mile further on is West Hendred, along the course of the Ginge stream that nestles in a pretty valley. It is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, when the chief estate

was held by the Abbey of St. Alban's. This was subsequently given to the Benedictine monks of Wallingford and at the Dissolution of Monasteries to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The other manor has been held by distinguished Berkshire families, the de Spersholts and the Wisemans. The church was mainly built between the years 1330 and 1350, and has some fine Decorated windows and buttresses at the east angles of the chancel. The east window is especially beautiful with its pretty cusping. The old lead roof remains, and there is some old glass showing the head of our Lord, the four Evangelists and the initials "E. S.," standing for Edmund Spersholt. The pulpit is Jacobean and there are some good fifteenth century bench ends. The hamlet of East Ginge lies on the south of West Hendred. The manor was held by the Benhams in the fifteenth century. The old house was built in late Tudor times and added to in the reign of Queen Anne. It contains a powder-closet, a secret hiding chamber and a good staircase, and is a most charming example of a manor house of the smaller type.

Close by is the village of Ardington, one of the prettiest in the county. It is owned by Lady Wantage, a very bountiful squiress, and was formerly the property of the Clarke family, to which belonged Mr. W. N. Clarke, to whose valuable work on the history of *The Hundred of Wanting* I have already referred. The manor came to the Clarks in 1497, and was held by them until the last century. The manor house once contained a splendid collection of pictures, known as the Vernon Collection, which Robert Vernon amassed here and in 1847 bequeathed to the nation. The history of the village dates back to the Norman Conquest, when Robert D'Oyley, Lord of Wallingford, received it through his wife Alghitha, daughter of Wigod, the Saxon lord. It passed through the hands of many noble families, and at one time its possession might be deemed unlucky, as two of its owners, John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon, and Lord Grey were attainted

and beheaded ; another was attainted, and Alice Perrers, the favourite of Edward III, had her lands forfeited.

The church is mainly Early English. The north doorway has a semicircular headed arch with dog-tooth mouldings. There is a sculptured head of a king and a dragon. There is a north tower and broach spire. There are some votive crosses here, the object of which I have already explained. The south doorway was erected about 1330 and has ball-flower mouldings, which also appear on the font, a sure sign of Decorated or fourteenth century work. There are north and south chapels, the former having been rebuilt. Besides the piscina in the chancel there are two others marking the site of altars. There are two squints or hagioscopes. The Clarke family memorials are in the south aisle. There are some curious lines on the monument of Sir Edward Clarke who married Susan Temple and who died in 1630 :

In this shrine together lye
Wisdom matcht with Sanctitye,
Hee a Clarke, shee without boast,
A Temple of the Holy Ghoste.

Though it is a little out of our way we must not pass Lockinge, the seat of the late Lord Wantage and of his widow, Lady Wantage, who has very large estates in Berkshire, and with her late husband has been the most generous of benefactors. Lord Wantage's career is a wonderful record. As Robert Lindsay he won his V.C. in the Crimean War. As M.P. he worked hard and performed important services for his country. He enjoyed the confidence of the Royal Family. He married the rich heiress of Lord Overstone who owned vast estates. He revived Berkshire agriculture and farmed on a colossal scale. He was one of the best of landlords, building farms and cottages and converting the villages on his estate into model villages. He was never tired of conferring benefits upon the town of Wantage. In all

this work Lady Wantage was his faithful coadjutor, and still loves to carry on beneficent schemes for the good of her neighbours and the advantage of the shire.

Pages might be written in describing this beautiful home, Lockinge House. Nature and art have combined to embellish the grounds in which it stands, and the house is a veritable home of art, containing a vast store of the works of the world's greatest painters. The collection was begun by Lord Overstone and has been increased by his successors. Across a lawn stands the church, and you enter beneath a Norman arch and notice a Norman font. The plan of the church is curious. The nave and south aisle are modern, and the chancel erected in the fourteenth century forms the eastern part of the north aisle. The pulpit is Jacobean and the tower states that it was built in 1564. There are many monuments of departed worthies, and amongst these are the memorials of the Collins family, who until 1889 held the manor of Betterton since 1520, when a lease was granted to John Collins by the Prior of Poughley.

So we pass to the ancient town of Wantage, where it behoves us to rest awhile. The "Bear Inn" invites repose. It is one of those charming old hostelries with an arched entrance to the stables and entrances on each side of it to the hospitable quarters within. It was a flourishing house in the old coaching days, and looks out on the market place where the modern statue of King Alfred reminds the town of its ancient glory and of its old life which we shall try to reconstruct. There may we dine and rest in comfort before starting afresh on our wanderings.

Wantage

THE old town lives in a little world of its own. It is connected with the outside world by a little steam-tramway, one of the earliest in England, that takes the Wantage folk from a primitive little station in the town to the station on the Great Western Railway, and thus brings it into contact with the rest of England. There is a spacious market place wherein stands the noble statue of King Alfred the Great, the tutelary genius of the town. This was carved by Count Gleichen, and presented to the town by Lord Wantage in 1877. Where it stands there was formerly an ugly looking town hall on wooden posts, surrounded by mean shops, representing a variety of trades, baker, butcher, tinker and coffee-house keeper; and these shops left but a narrow thoroughfare along which only one vehicle could pass at one time. Moreover there were the parish pond, the parish pump and the stocks. Those who remembered the last culprit who was fastened therein have only just passed away. It used to be a very lawless old town, and was once known as "Black Wantage." It was the headquarters of migratory folk, pedlars and hawkers and gipsies. Badger-baiting and cock-fighting were their favourite amusements, and in the yard of the "Camel-Inn" bull-baiting was carried on. Night watchmen paraded the streets and called out the hour and the state of the weather, "past twelve o'clock and a cloudy night," or "past three o'clock and a fine morn-

ing." Then, as now, the curfew rang; some say that a person who lost his way on the Downs left a sum of money for the ringing of this bell for the guidance of travellers who had suffered a like misfortune. A piece of land called "Bell-man's Swathe" provides for the ringing of a bell at 5 a.m. to call the rustics to their labours, and on Shrove Tuesday "Pan Bell" rings at eleven o'clock, a relic of the old Shriving Bell that called people to their confessions.

It is an old-world place, this Wantage. It has a grand old church, cruciform in plan, the principal feature being the massive appearance of its interior. It was wholly rebuilt about the end of the thirteenth century. We notice the magnificent piers and arches of the tower and the nave arcades, the remains of the screens and the fine woodwork of the misericords and poppy-heads in the large chancel. In the fifteenth century perpendicular windows and a porch were added, as well as the clerestory and oaken roof. This roof is a splendid specimen of fifteenth century carpentering. The church has been lengthened in modern times and alterations made. The south chapel has been restored in memory of the Rev. W. J. Butler, Dean of Lincoln, who was Vicar of Wantage for thirty-seven years, and accomplished a vast transformation in the town, rescuing it from its demoralized condition, rearing schools and sisterhoods and homes, and making it a model centre of church work.

When Leland visited the place in 1534 he found two churches in one churchyard, one of them of small dimensions, and remarks that the latter is "an ancient building now used as a school." Tradition states that it was founded by Alfred. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, and was dedicated to St. Mary the Blessed Virgin. This church was pulled down, and its very fine Norman doorway was built up again in the Grammar School buildings.

In the church is a noble alabaster altar tomb with effigies of Sir William Fitzwarren and Amicia his wife, of the date

1361. Their son, Sir Ivo Fitzwarren, is commemorated by a fine brass on the north-west pier of the tower. He died in 1414. His crest was a swan between ostrich feathers, which he took from his circumstance of having served with the Duke of Gloucester at the siege of Nantes. He was a far more interesting personage than is generally known, inasmuch as one of his daughters, Alice, was the wife of the famous Richard Whittington, "thrice Lord Mayor of London," as the bells of



Wantage

Bow prophesied, and the hero of the nursery tale. There are four other brasses in the church and several other monuments. The church also has some good plate, an Elizabethan chalice of the date 1571, and another bearing the hall mark of the year 1624.

In the time of the Domesday Survey the church was held by Petrus Episcopus, Bishop of Lichfield, and William the Deacon held some land of the king. But the Conqueror took

these lands into his own hands, and so they remained in the Crown until Henry II gave the church with its lands to the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy. When alien priories were abolished Henry V gave it to John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, who bequeathed it to Henry VI, and he gave it to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor who still possess the advowson.

The town's great title to fame is that it was the birthplace and early home of Alfred, our great national hero, law-maker, poet, sage, scholar and king. The traditions which have gathered round Alfred's name are those of religion, learning, defence, seamanship, law and culture, and Wantage may well be proud of its greatest son. Asser wrote in his *Annals*: "In the year of our Lord's Incarnation 849 was born Alfred, King of the Anglo-Saxons, at the royal villa of Wanating, in Berkshire, which county has its name from the word Berroc where the box-tree grows most abundantly." Here his early life was spent. Here he laid the early foundations of his love of learning, and here on the neighbouring downs he loved to hunt. Asser says: "He was a zealous practiser of hunting in all its branches, and hunted with great assiduity and success; for skill and good fortune in this art, as in all others, are among the gifts of God, as we also have often witnessed." Here his stepmother inspired his love for Saxon poetry, showing him a book of poems which she offered to the care of the royal children whosoever should the soonest learn to repeat the verses. Here, too, on the neighbouring downs he fought the Danes, and we shall try to conjure up the scene of his triumphs.

Traces of Alfred's palace are still believed to remain in the High Garden, where there is a close still bearing the name of "Court Close," and "Pallett's More" which has been supposed to be a corruption of Palace More. There is, also, what is known as "King Alfred's Bath," and tradition certainly associates this spot with the site of the palace of the Saxon

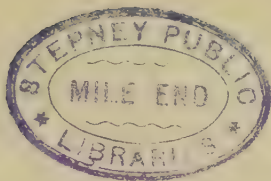
kings. On the same site stood the manor house of the Fitzwarrens, and so ancient times mingle with mediæval. Roman coins have been found here. Mr. Wise saw a brass of the Emperor Valens dug up with the word *Securitas Reipublicæ* on the reverse. We have been travelling along the Roman road, called the Portway, which still forms the road from Wallingford, continuing through Childrey and Uffington to Wiltshire; so it would be strange if no Roman relics were discovered here.

Alfred bequeathed his royal manor to his wife Ealswith, the daughter of Ethelred, Earl of Mercia, who died in 904 A.D. It then reverted to the royal demesne until the Conquest. Here a code of laws was drawn up by Ethelred II at his council in 990. A record of the town appears in Domesday. In the time of Henry III the manor was held by Walter, Earl of Pembroke, who died in 1245, and of him it was held by Fulke Fitzwarren. He was descended from a Norman baron, Guarine de Meer, who came over with the Conqueror and was appointed by him Warden of the Marches of Wales and Sheriff of Shropshire. This Fulke was a brave soldier and was drowned in a river at the battle of Lewes in 1264, fighting for the king. His posterity long continued to possess the manor. I need not record the further descent of the estate. A charter of market was granted to the Fitzwarrens in the time of Henry III. The town has no mayor and corporation, and it is governed by a curious body. Certain lands were given in the reigns of Henry VI and VII by the Lords Fitzwarren for certain charitable purposes. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth an Act was passed for the proper governing of this charity, whereby twelve governors were appointed who were constituted a body corporate having a common seal and were directed to administer the charity for the relief of the poor, the repair of the roads and the support of the grammar school. In a house near the church was born Joseph Butler, afterwards Bishop of Durham, the son of a dissenting trades-

man, and destined for the Presbyterian ministry. He, however, changed his views, entered Oriel College, Oxford, in 1714, and there laid the foundations of that learning which enabled him to crush and defeat the attacks of the theists and atheists of the eighteenth century by that immortal work *The Analogy of Religion*. He was Bishop of Bristol in 1738 and was translated to Durham in 1750.

Wantage had several old trades. Its inhabitants made sacking, twine, malt and flour. They manufactured hats, hemp, and cloth, and in the middle of the eighteenth century the town was known as "Golden Wantage." Tanning too prospered here and the paths in the courtyard of the old Stiles's almshouses, an interesting building, are paved with the knucklebones of sheep, a memento of this obsolete trade. Coal was brought by the Wilts and Berks Canal. A coach ran twice a week to London, starting from the "Alfred Head Hotel," and people used to make their wills before beginning their journey. During the Peninsular War a number of French prisoners were kept here, and amongst these Lieutenant De Gaja, one of the bravest officers in the French army. Here a French Masonic Lodge was formed by the prisoners.¹ Instead of its decayed old trades Wantage has taken to itself iron and engineering works, turning out agricultural implements, and bringing back some of its ancient prosperity. It has a new town hall at the corner of the market place, a fine Art Gallery, baths and reading-room, and in all these improvements the good hands and generous benefactions of Lord and Lady Wantage can be traced.

¹ Those who desire to know more about this old-world town are referred to a charming little book by Miss Agnes Gibbons and E. C. Davey, F.G.S., to which the writer is much indebted for valuable information.



VI

From Wantage to White Horse Hill

FROM Wantage as a centre many delightful excursions can be made. We might wander northwards through Charlton to Fritford and Bessels Leigh, or southwards to Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Basset, where there are two attractive churches and where the watercress grows. But we are eager to reach the region of the White Horse, King Alfred's country, Tom Hughes's country, and all the splendours that lie before us. So let us start southwards a little way and then turn sharp to right and sing Westward Ho ! We are travelling on the road to Sparsholt and Kingston Lisle ; but we must not pass Childrey, two miles out of Wantage. It is associated with the once great Berkshire family of the Fettiplaces, of whom the Berkshire rhyme says :

The Lacys, the Traces, and the Fettiplaces
Own all the parks and pleasant places.

A recent writer has observed that they were "a most remarkable family for their ancient descent, aristocratic alliances, acquisition of estates, and public benefactions." Moreover they were peculiarly attached to the two counties of Berks and Oxon which first saw their rise, and possessed in them some fifty manors besides about thirty other estates. No one seems to know the origin of their peculiar name, but

tradition asserts that the first member of the family was Gentleman Usher to William the Conqueror, and came over with him from Normandy, and it has been suggested that Fitz de-Plaas, or Pleasy, was the origin of the name. Adam Fettiplace, mayor of Oxford in 1245, was a prosperous citizen, who owned the manor of Wantage. He purchased also the estate of North Denchworth in Berkshire, where he and his successors continued to reside until the time of Charles II. It is impossible to follow in this book all the ramifications and connexions of this remarkable family. We shall meet with members of it again in our wanderings. It ended with the death of Sir George Fettiplace, Bart., in 1743, a bachelor and a man of immense wealth, and the name after having been twice revived in the female line became finally extinct at the death of Richard George Fettiplace in 1806. In Swinbrook church, Oxfordshire, there are numerous monuments arranged in tiers, and in many of the churches in the Vale there are memorials of them.

Sir Thomas Fettiplace, of Childrey and East Shefford, was living at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and made a remarkable marriage, having won the hand of Lady Beatrice, widow of Gilbert Talbot, Baron of Irehenfield and Blackmere, and of the royal house of Portugal. There is some mystery about this lady which I cannot discuss here, but you can see her tomb and effigy in alabaster with that of her husband in the disused church of East Shefford, Berks. The family never took prominent parts in "the field, the forum, or the senate," but they lived quietly on their estates, maintained the best traditions of country squires and conferred lasting benefits on the poor of the places in which they resided.

Sir John in the time of the Civil War fought for King Charles and was mulcted by the Roundheads to the tune of £1,943. However at the Restoration he was rewarded with a baronetcy. The old manor house of the Fettiplaces stood close to the church. It has been much renewed and partially rebuilt,

but there is a good fifteenth century doorway and formerly there was a grand old hall open to the roof of half-timber construction and big windows mullioned and transomed, with the coats of arms of the family displayed therein. In the garden there is a fine alley of clipt yews. In this house Charles I stayed with Lady Fettiplace in 1644 on his way to Oxford. It is built on an ancient site, and several Roman coins have been dug up in the garden. An inscription tells that Sir George Fettiplace founded the village school in 1732. The village is picturesque with a stream flowing through the village green, and there is a large rectory house, wherein parsons of note have lived their quiet lives, attended to their flocks and been borne to their resting places in the beautiful old church. Until recently the patrons of the living have been the Fellows of Corpus Christi College at Oxford, who naturally appointed one of their number. The giant cedar in the rectory garden was planted by Dr. Pocock, the first Laudian Professor of Arabic in 1646, and the late Mr. Vincent waxes eloquent on the contrast between this good rector quietly planting his cedar and the troublous times of the Civil War that was then drawing to its sorrowful end, when the king was vainly seeking safety in flight to Newark.

The church is an architectural gem and abounds with interesting features. It is a cruciform structure, and consists of a west tower, nave, south porch, transepts and chancel. The earliest portions are the north and south doorways of the nave and possibly the nave walls. These are of very late Transition Norman work, about the year 1200. The south example is semicircular headed and has twenty-eight large specimens of the dog-tooth ornament on the chamfer of the hood-moulding. There are several votive crosses, one deeply cut. The north doorway has been blocked up. The leaden font is very interesting, and is earlier than the doorways, a relic probably of an earlier church. At intervals round the bowl are sculptured twelve figures with low mitres, simply

vested, and each holding a pastoral staff in the right hand, and a book in the left.

The story of the church written in its stones seems to have been as follows: at the end of the thirteenth century the chancel was rebuilt, and a little later the transepts were added or reconstructed. In the middle of the fifteenth century many of the windows were inserted in the nave and chancel, and about the year 1500 the church was completed, as we see it now, by the erection of the tower and south porch, the enlargement of the transepts and the addition of the clerestory to the nave. First examining the chancel we see a fine Perpendicular window of five lights at the east end, and three Early Decorated windows. The double piscina and sedilia were fashioned about 1280. Opposite to them is the Easter sepulchre whereon was placed a wooden structure to contain the consecrated elements from the evening of Good Friday until Easter morn; during which time it was watched by a quasi-guard after the manner of our Lord's sepulchre. It is an excellent example of the style in vogue at the end of the reign of Edward III. In the chancel are some fine brasses. One shows the effigies of a knight and his lady and an inscription to the memory of Sir William Fynderne (died 1444) and Elizabeth his wife, widow of John Kyngestone. Another shows the figure of a priest, and another a knight and his lady with an inscription recording them to be John Kyngestone (died 1514) and Susan his wife. Between them is a representation of the Blessed Trinity. A headless priest, the figures of Bryan Ross, doctor of laws and parson of this church (died 1529), and William Walrond and Elizabeth his wife, who wears a horned head-dress, also appears in this fine collection of memorial brasses. The east window is a good Perpendicular example and has some excellent modern glass recently inserted.

Altars stood in the two transepts and there are squints by which the worshippers therein could see the elevation of

the Host. A cross-legged effigy called by the vulgar a "Crusader," lies under a fine Decorated canopy in the north transept. It is said to commemorate a member of the Chelrey family and was erected about the year 1330. The glass in the window above it is extremely interesting, and of great artistic merit. The scenes depicted are the Nativity, Annunciation, Ascension, Crucifixion and Assumption of the Virgin. The initials "W.F." indicates that the donor was William Fettiplace who died in 1526. This same good gentleman founded a chantry in the south transept, and there placed many memorials of his family. The chantry priest was directed to act as schoolmaster, and the founder laid down strenuous rules for his conduct and duties. If he should be a scandalous person, or keep hounds, or be a common hunter, or a stirrer-up of contention in the town of Childrey or the parts adjacent, "he should be amoved." He was to be well skilled in grammar, to enable him to keep the free school; he was to teach the children

"the alphabet, the Lord's Prayer, the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles' Creed, and all other things necessary to enable them to assist the priest in the celebration of mass, together with the psalm *de profundis*, and the usual prayers for the dead; to teach them likewise English, the fourteen articles of faith, the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven sacraments of the Church, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven works of mercy, as well corporal as spiritual, the five bodily senses, and the manner of confession. And if any should be apt and disposed to learn grammar, he was to instruct them after the best and more diligent manner that he could."

Verily the chantry priest was not an idle fellow, as is popularly supposed, and the children of Childrey were not very meanly educated in the rudiments of the faith. The arms of Fettiplaces appear, and there are several brasses which Mr. Keyser wisely conjectures from a study of the costumes were all executed by the founder at one time, though they record the memories of his immediate ancestors. The old glass here must be noted, the figures representing St. Edward

the Confessor, St. Michael and Satan and St. Catherine, to whom the chantry was dedicated. Old tiles, bench-ends and poppy-heads, some curious shrouded figures rising from their tombs, a second representation of the Holy Trinity, screen work, and much else demand attention. In the churchyard there is a curious inscription showing a complete indifference to the dividing of words :

Here lieth the
body of Thomas
Allen the Hus
ban of Jane Al
len who was
buried Septem
be the 9 day
1678
Aged 53.

We journey on another mile to Sparsholt which has another architectural gem of a church abounding with interest. It is especially rich in wooden effigies, and Dr. Fryer, who walked nearly 1,000 miles to photograph and inspect all the wooden effigies in England, discovered here some rare treasures.¹ There was a church here in 963 A.D., in which perhaps King Alfred worshipped. But this has entirely disappeared, and gave way in the twelfth century to a Norman building, of which some portions still remain. The church has been fortunate enough to escape Puritan outrage and the careless indifference of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is dedicated to the Holy Rood, and at present consists of a western tower and shingle spire, nave, north porch, south transept and chancel. It had formerly a north transept, but having fallen into decay this was removed in order to save the cost of repair. This happened in 1787, and it is sad to have to relate that the old rood screen and oak seats were turned out of the church and sold for a guinea a few

¹ Dr. Fryer's researches are published in *Archæologia*.

years later. By gift or purchase Robert de Eglesfield, the founder of Queen's College, Oxford, obtained the advowson and added this to the endowment of his college in 1342,¹ in whose gift it still remains.

Owing to the rough cast that covers its walls, it is difficult



to state with certainty the dates of the different portions. The lower part of the tower, probably the walls of the nave,

¹ Mr. Keyser, the President of the Berks Archæological Society, has written for my journal an elaborate account of this church, and I am indebted to him for much information concerning it.

the north and south doorways and the circular font belong to the Norman period. During the Decorated period a great enlargement took place and many beautiful architectural details were added, and in the fifteenth century Perpendicular windows were inserted. The spire was added later. In the interior we notice some beautiful sedilia and a piscina. There is the very fine tomb with beautiful ogee-headed and feathered canopy of a member of the Achard family, probably the builder of the chancel. Opposite to it is an Eastern sepulchre, such as I have described in the account of Childrey. An old chest is deposited within the canopy. There are numerous brasses, the most interesting being one of a priest, Williamus de Herleston of the fourteenth century. A small brass commemorates a lady and two children of about the date 1530. Others are to the memory of John Fetyplace and Margaret Andrews, widow (1602), Nicholas Cooke, vicar (1603), Thomas Todhunter, vicar (1627), John Williamson, vicar (1633), Richard Edmondson, vicar (1674). A long squint should be noticed, and some ancient glass, showing the figure of St. Katherine, the head of a lady with the word " Michi " several times repeated, and Our Lord in the act of blessing. There is the wooden effigy of a knight much mutilated, and beneath fine canopies are the effigies of two ladies who have wimples. Sir George Hyde, who was knighted at the coronation of James I, has a tablet to his memory. There is much else to notice in this very interesting church, far more than I have space to describe, and with much reluctance we tear ourselves away. In passing out we see the grand Norman doorway with several votive crosses carved on the jambs. I cannot refrain from quoting Elias Ashmole's translation of the Latin inscription on John Fettiplace's tomb :

Here rest in peace John Fettiplace's bones,
Whose little corps this little spot entombs :
His soul superiour to the grave did rise,
Left this low sphere, and dwells above the skies.

The manor house is the property of the Hippisley family. Mrs. Hippisley, the widow of Colonel Hippisley and daughter of Mrs. Hargreaves of Arborfield Hall, is the present owner. The house is famous for its archery annals. There was born the celebrated West Berks Archery Club in 1831, which still holds a distinguished place amongst toxophilites, and there was instituted the well-known York Round, consisting of seventy-two arrows at 100 yards, forty-eight at 80, and twenty-four at 60. The club is limited to twelve members, who meet at each other's houses in various parts of England to shoot this York Round. John Hughes, the father of Tom Hughes, was a prominent member, and presented a cup for annual competition. He wrote a famous ballad called the "Pindar of Wakefield's Legend," beginning :

The Pinder of Wakefield is my style,
And what I list I write ;
Whilom a clerk of Oxenford,
But now a wandering wight.

The lines from this ballad—

Stout arm, strong bow, and steady eye,
Union, true heart and courtesy,

have been adopted as the motto of the Grand National Archery Meeting. Mr. Henry Hippisley was the life and soul of the club, and had the knack of writing in archaic language. I have a copy of his quaintly worded "Freedom of the West Berks Archers to the Royal Toxophilite Society," which is worth quoting :

To the most honourable the Toxophilite Society, The Members of the Vale District of the West Berks United Archers, Greeting.

Right dutiful respect to your more Antient and Most Honourable Society, high admiration of your well-approved skill in Archery and gentle Courtesy without *us* thereunto moving, we do proffer unto you, most noble Bowmen, with all our humility, the *Freedom of our Society*, together with all such rights and privileges thereunto appertaining, as you in your courtesy have conferred on us, and duly appreciating the

right brotherly feeling of your honourable members towards us, we do entreat that you will be pleased to accept at our hands this token of high consideration and esteem.

By these presents therefore under the hand of our trusty and well-beloved Secretary, sealed with our Common Seal, we do hereby give and grant unto you and to every one of you the above-mentioned *Freedom of our Society* that ye may enjoy the same unto your hearts' content, and so we wish you farewell.

Given in our Hall at Sparsholte this 19th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1834.

(Signed) HENRY HIPPISEY.

With such pleasant devices did the old squire of Sparsholt disport himself and his many friends and Berkshire neighbours, and in imagination we see the goodly company with my Lord Craven as President and the Countess Barrington, patroness, gathered together on the shady lawns of the manor indulging in their favourite sport. It is sad that archery should have almost died out as a popular pastime.

Another mile conducts us to Kingston Lisle, which takes its name from the distinguished family of de Lisle (de Insulâ), William de Lisle having become possessed of it by marrying the heiress of the Fitzgeralds in the reign of Henry II, whose family had received a grant of the manor from Henry I. Nomenclature is but enshrined history. The name tells that the village was the "King's town" in the time of Domesday, and that it afterwards passed to the de Lisles. The little church is interesting. Its walls are Norman and it has a Norman doorway with curious iron-work on the old door, a Norman window and some good mural paintings. The manor has passed through the hands of several noble families, who had a habit of leaving only female heirs and thus causing it to pass by marriage to others. Amongst them were the Lord Berkeley, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, and others. The title of Baron or Viscount Lisle was several times lost and revived. The house has a beautiful park and is charmingly situated,

surrounded by grand gardens with old yew hedges and terraced lawns.

"What's the name of the village just below, landlord?" asks the traveller in *Tom Brown's School Days*.

"Kingstone Lisle, sir."

"Fine plantations you've got here?"

"Yes, sir, the squire's mighty fond of trees and such like."

"No wonder. He's got some real beauties to be fond of."

Every step brings us nearer to King Alfred's country, and here in this parish close to the park is the so-called King Alfred's Bugle Horn. It is a sarsen stone about a yard square, having a peculiar series of holes, so that if you blow into it and your lungs are strong, you produce a curious booming note that can be heard at a long distance. It is called the Blowing Stone, and the inn before which it stands under the shelter of an oak tree is named after it. The stone formerly stood at Uffington Castle long before King Alfred was born, and is believed to have been in use in Celtic times for the purpose of warning the tribes of the approach of an enemy, so that they might shelter themselves and their cattle within the ramparts of their stronghold. The squire of Kingston Lisle, Mr. Martin Atkins, placed the stone in its present position, if the local rhymester's words may be taken as evidence:

Atkins has preserved with care
This mystic remnant of the day
When Alfred ruled with regal sway;
And when the wise decrees of Fate
Made friend and foe confess him Great,
This trumpet loudly did proclaim
His way, his wisdom, and his fame.

Thomas Hughes in *Tom Brown's School Days* tells the story of this stone:

At the bottom of the hill there is a pleasant public, whereat we must really take a modest quencher, for down air is provocative of thirst. So we put up under an old oak which stands before the door.

"What is the name of yon hill, landlord?"

"Blawing Stwun Hill, sir, to be sure."

[READER "Stwun?"]

AUTHOR. "*Stone*, stupid: the *Blowing Stone*."

"And of your house? I can't make out the sign."

"Blawing Stwun, sir," says the landlord, pouring out his old ale from a Toby Philpot jug, with a melodious crack, into the long-necked glass.

"What queer names!" say we, sighing at the end of our draught, and holding out the glass to be replenished.

"Be 'ant queer at all, as I can see, sir," says mine host, handing back our glass, "seeing as this here is the Blawing Stwun his self," putting his hand on a spare lump of stone, some three feet and a half high, perforated with two or three queer holes, like petrified antediluvian rat holes, which lies there close under the oak, under our very nose. We are more than ever puzzled, and drink our second glass of ale, wondering what will come next. "Like to hear un, sir?" says mine host, setting down Toby Philpot on the tray, and resting both hands on the "Stwun."

We are ready for anything; and he, without waiting for a reply, applies his mouth to one of the rat holes. Something must come of it, if he doesn't burst. Good heavens! I hope he has no apoplectic tendencies. Yes, here it comes, sure enough, a gruesome sound between a moan and a roar, and spreads itself away over the valley, and up to the hillside, and into the woods at the back of the house, a ghostlike awful voice.

"Um do say, sir," says mine host rising purple faced, while the moan is still coming out of the Stwun, "as they used in old times to warn the countryside by blawing the Stwun when the enemy was a-comin'—and as how folks could make un heered then for seven mile round; least wise, so I've heered lawyer Smith say, and he knows a smart sight about them old times." We can hardly swallow lawyer Smith's seven miles, but could the blowing of the stone have been a summons, a sort of sending the fiery cross round the neighbourhood in old times? What old times? Who knows? We pay for our ale, and are thankful.

VII

The White Horse Hill and its Scouring

FOLLOWING the road past the stone we climb the hill, and a walk of less than a mile takes us straight to the old Icknield Way, along which our feet wander. It is not exactly a road for motors or carriages, and your bicycle must be strongly built to stand the ruts and unevenness. But it is a glorious road, nevertheless. When one looks down on the vale and breathes the keen air of the Berkshire downs, one feels that it is good to be an Englishman. Soon we reach Uffington Castle, no gaunt stone keep built square to every wind that blows, but an earthen rampart consisting of a vallum and a fosse with traces of a second vallum, enclosing a large area wherein the Celts doubtless sheltered their flocks when danger threatened. There is only one entrance, and that is on the west side. The hill slopes steeply down to the vale on the north, and this would add greatly to the strength of this primitive fortress. Now we approach the White Horse itself on the other side of the Ridgeway.

It is extraordinarily interesting and has caused a vast deal of controversy amongst antiquaries for the last two hundred years. This White Horse is one of those gigantic hill-side figures which may be seen in half-a-dozen other shires in England. It is formed by cutting away the green turf and exposing the white chalk beneath. Most of the other examples have been renovated and recut ; but this Berkshire White Horse remains very much in the condition in which

it was first formed, and is far more interesting than such an example as the White Horse at Westbury which has been transformed into a very modern well-set-up cob. Its shape proclaims its antiquity. It is not like an ordinary horse, but follows the outline of the animal represented on the old British coins which were copied from those of Philip II of Macedon, and it may be attributed to our Celtic forefathers, and not to King Alfred's men who are supposed to have carved it as a memorial of the great Battle of Ashdown which was fought against the Danes in 871 A.D.



White Horse at Uffington

I have before me a copy of *A Letter to Dr. Mead concerning some Antiquities in Berkshire*, particularly showing that the White Horse, which gives name to the great Vale or Valley which it overlooks, is a monument of the West Saxons, made in memory of a great Victory obtained over the Danes, A.D. 871. This was written by Dr. Francis Wise in 1738, a learned clergyman, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and Keeper of the Ratcliffe Library. His imagination rather ran away with him, and he did not escape the attacks of his contemporaries, especially of one "Philalethes Rusticus," who wrote a tract entitled *The impertinence and imposture of modern antiquities displayed*.

However, somewhere along this ridge the English fought and won the great Battle of Ashdown or Æscendune against the Danes, who were a Pagan plundering crew, not unlike the modern Huns, and so saved England and Christianity for many a long year. The English could not have stopped to carve out the White Horse, as we find that fourteen days later they were fighting at Basing, and not long afterwards at Merton. Then in the autumn the Danes received reinforcements and King Æthelred died and Alfred became king and fought four more pitched battles. The Saxon Chronicle sums up the matter thus :

“ In this year (871 A.D.) nine general battles were fought against the army in the kingdom south of the Thames ; besides which, Alfred, the king's brother, and single Alderman and King's Thanes, oftentimes made attacks on them, which were not numbered, and slew of them within the year one king and nine earls.”

This was not what the Pagans reckoned on ; they liked fighting very much in reason, as an accompaniment of spoiling a country, and did it well ; but to be fighting nine pitched battles in a year, hemmed in one corner of a rich kingdom (for they never got further than a few miles into Wiltshire), and getting no spoil even there, was not to their taste ; so in the winter they made truce with Alfred and took themselves off to their old haunts in Mercia and Northumbria, and did not return for five years.

But I have not told you about the Battle of Ashdown itself, and this story the old chroniclers shall narrate :

“ About four days after the battle at Reading (in which the Pagans were victorious—though the English inflicted a defeat on them at Englefield, eight miles away from that town) King Æthelred and Alfred his brother fought against the whole army of the Pagans at Ashdown. And they were in two bodies ; in the one were Bægseeg and Halfdene, the Pagan kings, and in the other were the earls. Now the Christians had determined that King Æthelred with his men should attack the two Pagan kings, but that Alfred, his brother, with his men should take their chance of war against the earls. Things being so settled, the king

remained a long time in prayer, hearing the mass, and said he would not leave it till the priest had done, nor abandon the protection of God for that of men. And so he did, which afterwards availed him much with the Almighty, as we shall declare more fully in the sequel. But the Pagans came up quickly to the fight. Then Alfred, though holding a lower authority, as I have been told by those who were there and would not lie, could no longer support the troops of the enemy, unless he retreated or charged upon them without waiting for his brother ; so he marched out promptly with his men in a close column and gave battle. He, too, knowing without a doubt that victory would not lie with a multitude of men, but in the pity and mercy of God, saw that the Pagans must not be allowed to get between him and his brother. But here I must inform those who are ignorant of the fact, that the field of battle was not equal for both armies. The Pagans occupied the higher ground, and the Christians came up from below. There was also in that place a single stunted thorn-tree, which I myself have seen with my own eyes. Around this tree the opposing hosts came together with loud shouts from all sides, the one to pursue their wicked course, the other to fight for their lives, their dearest ties and their country. In the midst of the fight, and when Alfred was hard pressed, the king came up with his fresh forces. And when both hosts had fought long and bravely, at last the Pagans, by God's judgment, could no longer bear the attack of the Christians, and having lost great part of their men, took to a disgraceful flight, and all the Pagan host pursued its flight, not only until night, but the next day, even until they reached the stronghold from which they came out. The Christians followed, slaying all they could reach, until it became dark. And the flower of the Pagan youth were there slain, so that neither before nor since was ever such destruction known since the Saxons first gained Britain by their arms. There fell in that battle King Bægseeg and three earls with him ; that old Earl Sidroc, to whom may be applied that saying, ' the ancient of evil days,' and Earl Sidroc the younger, and Earl Osbern, and Earl Frœna, and Earl Harold ; who with their men choosing the broad and spacious way went down into the depths of the lake. They knew not the way of teaching, nor understood its paths ; it was kept far from their faces. Ethelred slew Bægseeg with his own spear and another Pagan of note with his sword after he got up to the fight."

Such was the Ashdown Battle, a glorious victory for our gallant Berkshire men, of which they may well be proud, a prelude to many another brave stand, of which not the least glorious have been during the present fiery trial. Well might the Pagans have said of old as their modern prototypes have done when conquered and taken prisoners, " If we had known

you were here we would not have come." It was Alfred's crowning mercy and probably saved England a hundred years of Paganism. If they had won at Ashdown there was nothing to stop the hated Pagans between Reading and Exeter. So, say the old historians, the White Horse, the standard of Hengist, was cut out to commemorate the victory. It was a pretty legend, and we should like to believe it ; but as I have said the old horse was there some hundreds of years before the Vikings came to trouble England, and the scouring with its festivities may be a relic of ancient Celtic religious ceremonies rather than a commemoration of Alfred's victory.

These scourings were an extremely popular Berkshire festival, and the records of them date back to 1755. More than thirty thousand persons used to attend them, including the nobility and gentry of Berkshire and the neighbouring counties. The best description of the revels is given by Justice Hughes, Q.C., in his book *The Scouring of the White Horse*. This tells the story of the "pastimes" (as our Berkshire folk called them) in the year 1858. The programme varied little, and here is a copy of the printed handbill published in 1776 :

WHITE HORSE HILL, BERKS, 1776.

The scowering and cleansing of the White Horse is fixed for Monday, the 27th day of May ; on which day a Silver Cup will be run for near White Horse Hill by any horse &c. that never run for anything, carrying 11 stone, the best of 3 two-mile heats, to start at 10 o'clock.

Between the heats will be run for by poneys a Saddle, Bridle and Whip ; the best of two-mile heats, the winner of 2 heats will be entitled to the saddle, the second best the Bridle, and the third the Whip.

The same time a Thill Harness will be run for by cart horses &c. in their harness and bells, the carters to ride in smock frocks without saddles, crossing and jostling, but no whipping allowed.

A Flitch of Bacon to be run for by asses.

A good Hat to be run for by men in sacks, every man to bring his own sack.

A waistcoat, 10s. 6d. value, to be given to the person who shall take a bullet out of a tub of flour with his mouth in the shortest time.

A cheese to be run for down the White Horse Manger.

Smocks to be run for by ladies, the second best of each prize to be entitled to a Silk Hat.

Cudgel playing for a *gold-laced Hat* and a pair of buckskin Breeches, and *Wrestling* for a pair of Silver Buckles and a pair of Pumps.

The Horses to be on the White Horse Hill by 9 o'clock.

No less than four horses &c or asses to start for any of the above prizes.

Sometimes pleasing diversions were added. In 1780 there was "a jingling-match by eleven blindfolded men and one unmasked and hung with bells for a pair of buckskin breeches." Instead of the actual cheese that was rolled down the manger, sometimes the fore-wheel of a wagon was substituted; though William Ayres of Uffington, aged eighty-four, in 1857, when giving his recollection of the scouring in 1785, said: "Another geame wur to bowl a cheese down the mainger, and the first as could catch 'un had 'un. The cheese wur a tough 'un and held together a did I assure 'ee, but thaay as tasted 'un said a warn't very capital arter all." The same witness stated that "John Morse of Uffington, a queerish sort of a man, grinned agin another chap droo' hos collars, but John got beeat—a fine bit o' spwoort to be shure, and meead the volks laaf. There were running for a peg (pig) too, and they as could ketch 'un and hang 'un up by the tayle had 'un."

Backsword play and wrestling were great features of the entertainment, and there were grand contests between the champions of Berkshire, Wilts and Somerset. Some of their names have been preserved. In 1808 two men "with very shiny top-boots, quite gentlemen, from London," won the prize for back-sword play, one of which gentlemen was Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, who afterwards died at Waterloo. The contest took place on a raised platform and the one who "broke the other's head," causing blood to flow, was deemed the victor.

There were many side-shows, such as theatres, peep-shows, and acrobats, and the pink-eyed lady, publicans' booths,

huxter's stalls and cheap-Jacks, and of course feasting at long tables; and Lord Craven, who owned the property, always had two large tents erected for the entertainment of his friends, farmers and tenants. Wombwell's menagerie visited the scouring in 1843, and there was great difficulty in getting the elephant's caravan up the hill, and though twenty-four horses were put to, it stuck fast four or five times. It does not seem to have struck the Berkshire folk that it would have been simpler to turn the elephant out and make him pull up his own caravan. The race down the Manger for the cheese must have been exciting, as the short turf is slippery and the descent steep, and as for the hunt for the pig with greased tail it requires the graphic pen of Tom Brown and the spirited sketch of "Dicky" Doyle to help us to realise the "fun," as well as "the Lay of the Hunted Pig," who lamented:

Vathers, mothers, mothers' zons!
 You as loves yer little wuns!
 Happy pegs among the stubble,
 Listen to a tale of trouble;
 Listen, pegs in yard and sty,
 How the Barkshire chaps zard I.

As we look down just below the hill there is a high mound known as Dragon Hill, at the top of which the grass does not grow. Tradition says that this is the identical spot where St. George (or "King Gaarge" according to the rustics) slew the dragon, and that no verdure ever grew on the spot over which its poisonous blood flowed. But the name of the Hill should be Pendragon, which in Celtic signifies "Chief of Kings," a common appellation of a British king constituted such by vote in times of public distress. Thus Cæsar's Commentaries inform us that Cassibilan was chosen Pendragon by the allies at the time of Julius Cæsar's invasion. So I am afraid we must give up the tradition of St. George slaying the dragon on our Berkshire Downs. A little further

west along the Ridgeway we come to Wayland Smith's Cave, a neolithic burial place, which recalls the mythology of Væland or Weland-the-Smith. It consists of several large stones set on edge and enclosing a small chamber for the interment of the body of the person entombed. These were formerly "cap stones." Recently Mr. D'Almaine of Abingdon, has been exploring and investigating this very ancient monument, and we are looking forward with much interest to the disclosure of his discoveries. "Welland's Smithy" was a well-known landmark in 955 A.D., as it is referred to as a boundary mark in the Chronicles of Abingdon Abbey. Dr. Wise imagined that it was the burial place of King Bægseeg, slain at the Battle of Ashdown, but he is wrong by a few thousand years. Every one will remember Sir Walter Scott's reference to it in *Kenilworth*, and his account of the invisible smith. The traveller was directed by Hobgoblin as follows :

"You must tie your horse to that upright stone that has a ring in it, and then you must whistle three times, and lay down your money on that flat stone, and then sit down among the bushes and not look for ten minutes. Then you will hear the hammer clink. Then say your prayers, and you will find your money gone and your horse shod." The traveller acted in accordance with these directions and the wonder was performed.

The old shepherds on the hill used to talk over these stories of olden times and had a taste for rhyming. One Job Cork who lived about 120 years ago told in verse the story of St. George and the Dragon, and then recorded :

If you along the Ridgeway go
About a mile for aught I know,
There Wayland's Cave then you may see
Surrounded by a group of trees.

They say that in this cave did dwell
A smith that was invisible ;
At last he was found out, they say,
He blew up the place and vled away.

To Devonshire then he did go,
Full of sorrow, grief and woe,
Never to return again,
So here I'll add the shepherd's name—

Job Cork.

VIII

Uffington and Tom Brown

DOWN the hill we tramp leaving Compton Beauchamp on our left at the foot of the hill, where there is a very charming moated manor house girt with trees, the home when I last visited it of Judge Bacon. It has a very good iron gateway and was built in Elizabethan times, the front of the quadrangle being added in the eighteenth century. It nestles close to the hillside, where twenty Marianas may have lived, with its bright water-lilies in the moat, and its yew walk, the "Cloister Walk," and its peerless terraced gardens, as Tom Brown remarks. The church with its old glass is also worthy of a visit. We travel along the old Roman road. Just off the road is Woolstone with its Norman doorway and lead font, and through this hamlet we pass and soon arrive at Uffington.

This village is the old Saxon Uffinga's town, and is supposed by some to be connected with King Offa, but there are reasons against their theory. Here Tom Hughes, in whose country we have been revelling, was born and reared, and never left it till he was eight years old, when his family removed to Donnington Priory, near Newberry, and he went to Rugby School. "Born and bred a west-countryman, thank God! a Wessex man, a citizen of the noblest kingdom of Wessex, a regular 'Angular Saxon,' the very soul of the *adscriptus glebæ*." Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A., tells us of the connexion of Tom Hughes's family with Uffington. This arose from the marriage of the Rev. Thomas Hughes, D.D., preceptor in the royal family of George III, subsequently Canon of St. Paul's,



Uffington.



and one of the Clerks of the Closet to George III and George IV with Mary Anne, daughter and heiress of the Rev. George Watts, Vicar of Uffington, and granddaughter of the Rev. George Watts, Chaplain to George II and Master of the Temple. By this lady Dr. Hughes, who, with his other preferments was Vicar of Uffington, had an only son, the late John Hughes, of Donnington Priory, the father of "Tom," who was born at Uffington on October 19, 1822. "Tom's" grandmother, the wife of Dr. Thomas Hughes was known as "Madame." She was an accomplished musician, and the friend of the Rev. Richard Harris Barham, author of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, who often visited her at Uffington, and there learnt some of the legends and anecdotes that formed the groundwork of his poetical effusions. Among these was the story of "Hamilton Tighe," whose real name was Hampden Pye, and who lived at Faringdon before he went to sea. There are several letters written by the witty canon to Mrs. Hughes and published in his biography. In one of these characteristic epistles, containing an acknowledgement of a present from Mrs. Hughes of one of those beguiling Berkshire delicacies so fraught with peril to the inexperienced or unwary, the author of "the Legends" thus humorously opens his letter of thanks :

"My dear Madam—I know not how to thank you. 'Rude I am in speech and manner; never till this hour Tasted I such a dainty.' But young Norval never had such a 'pig's head' to be thankful for; it is truly delicious—almost too much so indeed, for it tempted me last night to do what I very seldom do, and never ought to do: viz., eat a hearty supper: the consequence was that I 'dreamt of the d—l, and awoke in a fright.'":—

Methought I was seated in church,
 With Wellington acting as clerk,
 And there in a pew,
 Was Rothschild the Jew
 Dancing a jig with Judge Park;
 Lady Morgan sat playing the organ,
 While behind the vestry-door,
 Horace Twiss was snatching a kiss
 From the lips of Hannah More.

Dr. Hughes was a great friend of Sir Walter Scott who visited in his company the scenes we have already witnessed, the White Horse Hill, Wayland Smith's Cave and other antiquities in the neighbourhood, which the " Wizard of the North " wove into his great novel *Kenilworth*.

So here with Uffington all " Tom " Hughes's early associations were connected, and these he immortalized in his famous schoolboy story, the best and most enduring that has ever been written. Its tone contrasts strangely with a recently published schoolboy story which is wholly decadent and I believe untrue. The old schoolroom still stands " on an angle of ground where three roads meet, an old grey-stone building with a steep roof and mullioned windows. On one of the opposite angles stood Squire Brown's stables and kennel, with their backs to the road, over which towered a great elm tree ; on the third stood the village carpenter and wheelwright's large open shop, and his house and the schoolmaster's, with long low caves under which the swallows built by scores." We can see it all the same to-day, save that the school only performs educational functions as a village reading-room. The Education Department has pronounced the old " richly endowed school " unsuited to modern notions and requirements. We can imagine Tom enraging the village wheelwright and the schoolmaster by certain mischievous pranks, his games with the boys in the paddock where he learnt the art and skill of wrestling, and that wonderful fall of Harry Winburn which stood our hero in such good stead at a subsequent period of his career. The school was built by John Saunders in 1617.

The noble church, one of the finest in the Vale, was founded by Faritius, Abbot of Abingdon, in 1105. It rises picturesquely against the chalk downs, and is cruciform in plan, with a fine central octagonal lantern tower. No part of the early church remains, save a small recess on the south side of the chancel. The manor was granted to Reading Abbey, and the monks seem to have set themselves to rebuild the church

entirely in the first half of the thirteenth century. It consists of a nave with south porch, transepts with eastern chapels, chancel and tower. We notice in the interior the beautiful scheme of piscina and three graduated sedilia all trefoil headed in the chancel, the four central tower arches, the fine chapels in the transepts, the aumbry in the northern one and the piscinas, and the large chest. The heads of the windows of the nave have unfortunately been cut off by a flat lead roof erected in 1678. An inscription states that "this church long ruined, was repaired by Richard Saunders and Thomas Lockey, Churchwardens, 1678," and these gentlemen were doubtless guilty of lopping off the tops of the windows. However, if we may judge from a contemporary record, the vandalism of these rustic restorers did not go unpunished, for after the spoliation they were both excommunicated by the vicar, no doubt with a view to stay their hands. This good vicar deserves a memorial in the church where the churchwarden architects record their own achievements. The remains of the twelve consecration crosses happily still exist. On the east of the south transept there is a fine Early English round-headed porch, and on the south of the nave a remarkably good porch of the same date. Formerly there was a spire on the top of the tower, but according to an entry in one of the books at the church this was on December 2, 1743 "beat down by a tempest, wind, thunder and litten." Some fine yew trees keep watch and ward over the graves in the churchyard.

So we leave this pleasant village of the Vale, but ere we go let us recall the words of him who was born in it and loved it, as we look back on the brave White Horse.

"What a hill is the White Horse Hill! There it stands right up above the rest, nine hundred feet above the sea, and the boldest, bravest shape for a chalk hill you ever saw. Ay, you may well wonder and think it odd you have never heard of this before, but wonder as you may please, there are hundreds of such things lying about England which wiser folk than you know nothing of, and care nothing for. Was

there ever such turf in the whole world ? You sink up to your ankles in it at every step, and yet the spring of it is delicious. There is always a breeze in the 'camp,' as it is called, and here it lies just as the Romans left it. It is altogether a place that you won't forget—a place to open a man's soul and make him prophesy, as he looks down on that great vale spread out as the Garden of the Lord before him, and wave after wave of the mysterious downs behind, and to the right and left the chalk hill running away into the distance, along which he can trace for miles the old Roman road, the 'Ridgeway' (the Rudge, as the country folk call it) keeping straight along the highest back of the hills—such a place as Balak brought Balaam to, and told him to prophesy against the people in the valley beneath. And he could not ; neither shall you, for they are a people of the Lord who abide there."

We now turn our backs on the hill and strike a course northwards, making for Farningdon, which shall be our next stopping-place and centre. We can, if we are lazy, take the train from Uffington station, or pass by road through Farningdon and Little Coxwell, where there is a small Transitional Norman church, to the north-west Berkshire town, wherein we can find comfortable beds at the "Crown" or the "Bell," and there rest awhile.

Part III

WHERE THREE COUNTIES MEET





Faringdon Hill.

To face page 227.]

I

Faringdon

THE old town is a peaceful placid place, and now rests comfortably in its quiet corner of the Vale. It is generally supposed to have had no history, but this is an error which may safely be corrected. Though the railways have left it high and dry, save for the little branch line from Uffington, it is the centre of great roads. The building of the bridge over the Thames at Abingdon in the time of Henry V considerably increased the importance of the town, as through it began to flow the traffic from the west, the wains of the clothiers and wool-merchants of Cirencester and Gloucester. With Abingdon it now shares its eventual rest. In the old coaching days Faringdon was a busy place, and the "Crown" and the "Bell" inns were kept fully alive when the coaches came rolling in, and all was bustle and excitement, and great folks from Oxford and London stayed the night at these hostelries, and the cheery notes of the post-horn startled the echoes of the old streets.

The old way of spelling the name was Farendon, Farndon, Ferendone; hence the patronymic *ing* is, as Professor Skeat points out, delusive and unoriginal. It seems to mean "fern-down" or "fern-hill." In British times the Belgæ's wave of conquest was stayed by the great forest of the Kennet Valley, and beyond this on the Ilsley Downs and in this district the original Celts found a refuge and a home. British coins of

Tincomius, the son of the Atrebarian Commius, have been found at Faringdon.

The history of the town begins with the following statement in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle :

"Anno 924. This year King Edward died among the Mercians at Farndon, and very shortly, about sixteen days after this, Edward his son died at Oxford ; and their bodies lie at Winchester." Mr. Plummer explains that this Farndon refers to our Berkshire Faringdon. The King was Edward the Elder, the first of the royal Edwards, the son of Alfred the Great. Hence Faringdon was a royal manor and had a palace ; and it remained in the hands of the sovereigns of England until the beginning of the thirteenth century.

It occupied a strong strategic position. Hence it took a prominent part in most of the civil wars that have devastated our land. During the war between Stephen and "that ungodly restless woman, the undutiful daughter of our late pious King Henry," as the Abbot of Reading was pleased to call "that presumptuous Matilda," Faringdon took an important part in the conflict. Her half-brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester, raged through the country, seized upon the king's towns, treacherously surprising the castle of honest lords and good knights, and burning the homes and destroying the lives of all such as would not join him. It was the age of castle building. Every rich man, says the chronicle, his castle made, when the land was full of castle works, and when, as the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men. This Earl of Gloucester built one here in 1144, a hurriedly erected structure which did not live long. At the close of Stephen's reign the king ordered every castle to be levelled that had been left standing in this fair county of Berkshire, and so Sir Alain de Bohun and his soldiers together with the Abbot of Reading perambulated the country and ordered the boroughs and townships and all good men to assist in rooting out the foul donjons which disfigured the land

like blots of ink let fall upon a pure skin of parchment. Quick was their work, and the country folk of their own free will came flocking with pickaxes and mattocks on their shoulders, and as soon as the castles were levelled the Lord Abbot of Reading did sprinkle holy water upon the spot to drive away the evil spirits that had so long reigned there and the land had peace.

In the meantime the Norman builders had begun to build the noble church. There must have been a Saxon church here previously, but I know of no trace of this earlier edifice. The north door and tower and the much restored south door are the chief evidences of Norman workmanship. A little later the town just escaped the honour of possessing a grand and glorious abbey built by Cistercian monks which might have rivalled the splendour of Waverley or Tintern, or Fountains monasteries built by this Order. A colony settled here, and in 1203 King John gave to them the manor of Faringdon, on the condition that they built a monastery there. However, in the following year he determined to transfer his donation to his newly founded abbey of Beaulieu, in Hampshire, and Faringdon was deprived of its monastery. Nevertheless the town was not altogether deserted by the monks. Some stayed on in a small town (probably on the site of the old manor house) which became a cell to Beaulieu Abbey.

The first charter was granted in 1218 by King Henry III. It contains a grant of a market on Mondays to the Abbot of Beaulieu. The burgesses had held a market on that day of the week long before this, as appears from the charter granted by Edward II in 1313 when the day was changed to Wednesday; but the possession of fairs and markets was much coveted in mediæval times, and doubtless the Abbot of Beaulieu was easily able to persuade the young King Henry to bestow on him the market, the tolls of which considerably increased the treasury of his abbey.

Leland says, "Some call this town Cheping Farington, but there is none or very small market now at it."

There is preserved in the Bodleian library an old account book of Beaulieu Abbey. One item tells of the visit of the court of Henry III to Farringdon. The king was accompanied by his queen, Prince Edward, and Roger de Mortimer, and stayed a night here, being entertained at the cost of the abbot and convent.

The expense of entertaining the king does not sound to us very costly. It was only 100s. 6d. The queen cost 75s., Prince Edward 50s. 6d., and Robert de Mortimer, the king's favourite general, only cost 4s.

The life of the old town went on peacefully and quietly. The monks were busy building and perfecting the church in that most fruitful period of Gothic architecture, the Early English. The town continued to be governed by its bailiff and burgesses. The Abbot of Beaulieu still remained lord of the manor. Again its peaceful calm is broken by the sound of fighting. The nobles are in league against their lawful sovereign, Richard II. Headed by the Earl of Derby, son of the Duke of Lancaster, they made an insurrection, and here came Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a worthless creature and favourite of the king who created him Marquis of Dublin (a title before unknown in England) and then Duke of Ireland, transferring to him for life the sovereignty of that island. A battle was fought near here at Radcot Bridge, in 1387, when De Vere was defeated, and only escaped by swimming his horse across the river. Of this exploit the poet sings:

Here Oxford's hero, famous for his boar,
While clashing swords upon his target sound,
And showers of arrows from his breast rebound
Prepared for worst of fates, undaunted stood,
And urged his beast into the rapid flood,
The waves in triumph bore him, and were proud
To sink beneath their honourable load.

Poets are always allowed a little poetical licence. There

does not seem to have been much of the hero about this king's favourite, who fled to the Low Countries and died in exile at Louvain a few years later.¹ Nothing else occurred to disturb the quietness of this peaceful vale until the trouble of the Reformation period. At the dissolution of abbeys in 1536 Beaulieu fell with the rest, and the white-clothed monks disappear from Faringdon, and the manor is again vested in the Crown. In 1547 it was granted to Thomas Seymour, of Sudsley, Lord Admiral; but on his attainder it again reverted to the Crown.

In 1554 Queen Mary granted it to Sir Francis Englefield; but those were dangerous days for men of rank and property, and on his attainder the manor passed in 1555 by purchase to the family of Bleydell, of Coleshill, who held it until the year 1589 when it was sold for £3,000 to Sir Henry Unton, Knight of Wadley. This family, which gives its name to the Unton chapel in the church was one of more than local celebrity in the reign of "Good Queen Bess." A valuable work known as the *Unton Inventions*, relating to Wadley and Faringdon in 1596, and published by the Berks Ashmolean Society in 1840 records many details of this distinguished family. They were great people, these Untons. Three of them represented Berkshire in Parliament, and among their alliances we find the illustrious names of Bouchier, Seymour and Hastings. The earliest Unton of whom we read came from Chorley, Lancashire, and was Chirographer to Edward IV. Sir Thomas was Sheriff of Berks in 1551, and resided at Wadley near here, a manor belonging to Oriel College, Oxford, and was knighted at the coronation of Anne Boleyn. He died in 1553 and his monument with that of his wife Dame Elizabeth is the oldest and most handsome in the church. Sir Alexander Unton succeeded. He married Mary Bouchier, daughter of John Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart's Chronicles. He was knighted at the coronation of Edward VI. His monument

¹ Stow gives an account of this battle.

is on the left hand of that of his father, a canopied altar-tomb ; at the back are engraved brass plates, with figures of his two wives and children, and many armorial bearings are engraved on the mantles. His son, Sir Edward Unton, married Anne, Countess of Warwick, whose father was beheaded, and whose first husband only just escaped the same fate and died a few days after his release from the Tower. The Countess soon consoled herself and married Sir Edward Unton six months after her first husband died. The poor lady, however, afterwards went mad. Sir Edward was a great traveller, and the British Museum has a MS. Journal of his travels in Italy. Queen Elizabeth came to stay with him at Wadley, to whom he presented a handsome jewel, thus described " One jewel of gold garnished with diamonds and rubies, and five pearls pendant, one bigger than the rest." He seems to have been a favourite of his royal mistress, and gave her other rich jewels. When men give ladies costly jewels, we begin to suspect some secret attachment, and possibly Sir Edward Unton shared with the Earl of Leicester, Earl Essex, the Duke of Anjou, and many others, an affection for the fickle queen. He was buried at Faringdon, and his monument is on the east wall of the Unton chapel.

Colonel Edward Unton, the next heir, commanded a force for the defence of the country at the time of the Spanish Armada. He was slain fighting in Portugal with Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake. Now we come to the last and most distinguished scion of the race, Sir Henry Unton, who was educated at Oriel College, Oxford. In 1586 he was present at the Siege of Zutphen when his kinsman Sir Philip Sydney was slain, and he was knighted by the Earl of Leicester. In 1591 he was appointed Ambassador to France which he found an expensive post, and complains to the Lord Treasurer Burghley that he has only £500 left of the £2,500 he brought with him, and finds the cost of keeping his horses a burdensome business. He sent a spirited challenge to the young

Duke Henri de Guise in gallant resentment of some disparagement cast on the honour of his queen, and declared "that in speaking basely of her he had most wickedly and shamefully lied."

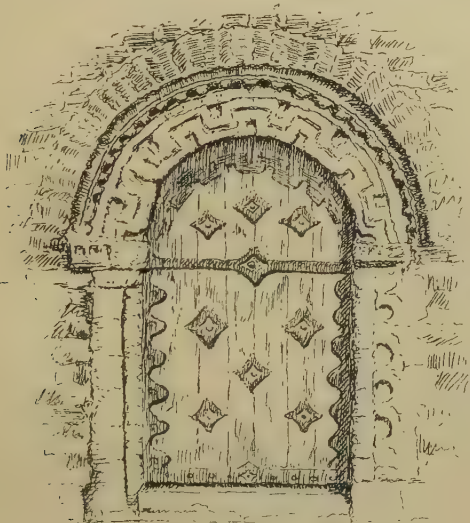
Thomas Fuller in his *Worthies* thus records the proceedings

"In the month of March, anno 1592, being sensible of some injury offered by the Duke of Guise to the honour of the Queen of England, he sent him this ensuing challenge: Forasmuch as lately, in the lodging of my Lord Du Mayne, and in public elsewhere, impudently, indiscreetly and over boldly, you spoke badly of my Sovereign; I say you have wickedly lyed in speaking so basely of my Sovereign: and you shall do nothing else but lie, whensoever you shall tax her honour. Moreover that her sacred person ought not to be evil-spoken of by the tongue of such a perfidious traitor to her Law and Country as you are. And here upon I do defy you, and challenge your person to mine, be it either on horseback or on foot, I being issued of as great a race and noble house as yourself. So I will maintain the lie I gave you. If you consent not to meet me hereupon I will hold you and cause you to be generally held, for the arrantest coward and most slanderous slave that lives in all France. I expect your answer."

As far as we know the Duke refused the challenge and dared not fight against his fiery young Englishman. Sir Henry's health failed him and he died in Paris of the "purple fever" caught in the French camp, his body being conveyed to England and buried here, where a noble monument was raised which suffered severely in the troubles of the Civil War, and was rebuilt in 1658. As he had no children, the Unton family became extinct in the male line, and the manor passed to the daughter of his sister, Anne, wife of Valentine Knightley. James I and his queen visited Faringdon and Wadley. The old family of the Purefoys afterwards resided at Wadley. The manor of Faringdon was purchased from the executors of Sir Henry Unton (Sir John Wentworth and others), and in 1622 by Sir Robert Pye, in whose family it continued for 166 years. Henry James Pye built the present Faringdon House. He was poet laureate and M.P. Poets laureate are not always a success, and Pye's poems are all forgotten, except

perhaps his verses on "Faringdon Hill" which still have a local reputation. This Pye sold the manor to Mr. Hallet, and the Bennett family now hold it. Faringdon played an important part in the Civil War and can boast of being one of the few places which successfully resisted the attack of the Parliamentary army when led by the genius and valour of Cromwell in person. Clarendon tells us that King Charles came here soon after the second Battle of Newbury (Oct. 27, 1644) with some hope of surprising Abingdon on his way. Faringdon house was a royal garrison, of which Sir Marmaduke Rawdon was appointed Governor. He died in 1646 and his tomb is in the church. Radcot Bridge was fortified for the king as an outwork to the town, but was surrendered after fifteen days' siege in May, 1646. In 1645 the governor of the garrison was a brave and loyal officer, Roger Burgess by name, and to him belong the distinction of inflicting a repulse on the conqueror of Marston Moor and Naseby. Cromwell attacked the house with 600 men taken from the garrison at Abingdon. In the following year an equally unsuccessful attack was made under the command of Sir Robert Pye who held a commission in the Parliamentary army, and singularly enough he was the proprietor of the house and manor at the time. Such was the fortune of war; happily it is not the fate of every one to be obliged to batter down his own house, and not even then to gain an entrance, as his attack failed. Sir George Lisle was then Governor of the Garrison. The town suffered enormously during these military operations. The spire which once adorned the church steeple was beaten down by the artillery of the assailants, and much damage was done to the interior of the sacred building. Very many houses were destroyed by fire, and the whole place suffered enormously. Faringdon was one of the last places which held out for the royal cause. Not until the king's cause was hopeless, and not until the king commanded the brave garrison to yield, was the surrender made. This was in June, 1646, when

Oxford, Donnington Castle, and other brave garrisons in Berks and Bucks yielded to the inevitable, pursuant to the articles for the surrender of Oxford in which Faringdon was included. The townsmen of Faringdon, seeing the deplorable condition of their beloved town, the ruined houses and desolated streets, petitioned Parliament to grant them money



Faringdon.
North Door

to rebuild their waste places, and a goodly sum they demanded, showing that the damage must have been great. Whether they ever recovered the sum which they asked, I have not been able to discover.

In the centre of the market place is the old town hall, a venerable building with an undercroft. The church is a very fine one, and mainly owes its beauty to the excellent work

of the Monks of Beaulieu, to whom King John gave the church and manor, as I have already stated. They seem to have been at work here very soon after their acquisition of the property, as most of the church is an excellent example of the Early English period. It is cruciform in plan, and formerly had a spire which was destroyed, as I have mentioned, during the Civil War, together with the south transept which has been rebuilt. The monuments are many and cannot all be recorded here. There are brasses to the memory of Thomas Faringdon, his wife and daughter (1450), John Parker (1485), John Sadler, vicar (1505). There are many memorials to members of the Unton family in the north transept which is called the Unton Chapel. The most magnificent of these is that of Sir Henry Unton who so boldly defended the honour of his queen before the highest and proudest in the court of France. It is a fine alabaster altar-tomb, erected by his widow Dorothy, whose effigy has been taken from the side of her husband and placed elsewhere by the careless and unscrupulous hands of church-restorers. A cannon-ball embedded in the wall at the east end looks like a relic of the siege of Faringdon, but it is really a memento of the wounding of a gallant officer of the Royal Navy, one John Buckley, in a sea-fight off the coast of Portugal, as by it his leg was shot off. He was steward to Henry Pye who recorded on his tablet: "Always preferring his Masters Credit and Interest to any private gain Of his Own. In regard therefore to such just and Singular Behaviour and in perpetual memory of such Honest virtue the said Henry Pye hath erected this Monument." Before leaving the church we notice the beautiful old wrought ironwork on the south door.

Close to the church stands Faringdon House. The present house was built by Henry James Pye, the most feeble of our Poets Laureate, in 1780, in the Italian style. He was M.P. for Bucks, Police Magistrate for Westminster, and received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford University.

Faringdon Clump, just outside the town, was planted by him, and this work has been more enduring than his poetry, and is said to have been "the most poetic act of his life." He is, however, immortalized by a line of Byron, who wrote :

Better to err with Pope than shine with Pye.



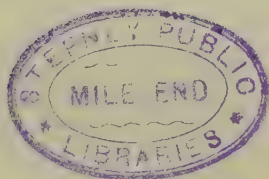
II

Excursions from Faringdon

THERE are several interesting little tours that can be made with Faringdon as a centre, but we may not follow them all, or we shall never reach our journey's end. We will first journey to

Coleshill viâ Great Coxwell, just cross the border into Wilts and see Highworth, and return by Shrivenham and Watchfield.

Great Coxwell is famous for its noble tithe, or rather grange, barn. It is one of the finest in England. It is not so large as some others, and was surpassed in size by the Cholsey barn, Berkshire, now destroyed. Tisbury barn, near Salisbury, is a serious rival ; but you will not find a better preserved barn of its kind than this. It belonged to the Cistercian Abbey to Beaulieu, to which King John granted the manor with that of Faringdon in 1204. The barn is of thirteenth century construction, probably erected by the monks when they took possession of the estate, and we shall see at Highworth a very similar building of the same date, but of much smaller size. At this Coxwell barn we notice the immense high towering timbers that support the roof. It measures 152 feet by 40 feet and is 30 feet in height. The walls are 4 feet in thickness. The south door is modern, but the east and west doors are ancient, and on the east is a fine porch, and a place where the monks used to sleep during harvest time. The floor is com-





Coleshill House.

posed of beaten mud and the roof of heavy Stonesfield slate. The abbey owned the manor and farmed it, having a bailiff to look after the estate. In the church there is a brass to the memory of John Morys and William Morys. William is described as "sometimes farmer of Cokyswell," and when the abbey was dissolved, he obtained the manor and farmed it for himself as his own master. Antiquaries may be interested to know that from this family descended Edward Rowe Mores, who projected a history of Berkshire, but did not progress very far with the work, some of which was published in his *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*. The manor was purchased from the Mores family by Sir Henry Pratt, of Coleshill, and sold by Lady George Pratt in 1697 to pay her debts which were perhaps contracted by the building of Coleshill House. The barn and manor house were purchased by her grandson George Pratt Richmond, alias Webb, in 1700, and remained in his family for a century. They are now the property of the owners of Coleshill House, the Pleydell-Bouveries. The old barn has a very ecclesiastical appearance with its aisles and buttresses, and William Morris used to declare that it was one of the finest buildings in the world. Close to the barn is an Elizabethan farmhouse, called Court House Farm, inhabited when last I visited the place by Mr. Gearing, whose family has held it for a long period. Not far away is the church of St. Giles which reveals the care of the monks for the welfare of the people on their estates. It was begun before the monks came, as there are evidences which show that much of it was built in the latter part of the twelfth century. The arches are round-headed. The monks probably built the chancel, which is of Early English style, and has two plain lancet windows and a low-side window. A little later, about 1250-60, they inserted the east window with its trefoil-headed arch, in a style approximating to the Decorated period. The walls of the nave are old, but the pious and industrious monks, eager to add beauty to the sanctuary, enriched the

arch of the window on the south with foliation, cinquefoil and septfoil, in the early part of the fourteenth century. The tower was built in the fifteenth century, and the brackets that support the chancel arch are of this period. The door is ancient, and there is a Jacobean pulpit with the stairs leading to the rood loft. I have already referred to the brasses of John and William Morys which conclude with the ancient pious prayer "on whose soul Jesu have mercy. Amen." We never seem to get away far from the old White Horse, the tutelary genius of the Vale, and he looks down upon us as we rest on the churchyard stile.

Passing onwards we come to the charming village of Coleshill, abounding in beautiful picturesque cottages, a fine church, and a noble house, the *chef d'œuvre* of one of the best of English architects. Coleshill House, the seat of the Pleydell-Bouveries, was built by Inigo Jones two years before his death. A receipt for one of the chimney-pieces, dated April 21, 1660, is still in the possession of the Earl of Radnor, brother of the late Hon. Duncombe Pleydell-Bouverie who resided there when last I visited the house. This receipt fixes the date of the building. In olden days the manor belonged to the Edindon family, and was given by William de Edindon, Bishop of Worcester, to the Priory of Bonnes-Lommas at Edinton in Wiltshire. After the dissolution of that priory it was given to Thomas Lord Seymour, Lord Admiral of the Fleet, who secretly married Catherine Parr, the last of Henry VIII's many queens, and had the custody of the Princess Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey. He wanted to marry the former who used to dance and flirt with him, fell out with and defied the power of Protector Somerset, and for his pains was beheaded. The manor became the property of Anne, Duchess of Somerset, and then of Arthur Grey of Wilton. In 1601 it belonged to Sir Thomas Freake who sold it in 1626 to Sir Henry Pratt, Alderman of the City of London, created a baronet in 1641. He died suddenly in 1647 one Sunday morning in church, and

was succeeded by his son Sir George Pratt, the second and last baronet, on whose death his sister became the heir and brought Coleshill by marriage to the Pleydell family. She married Thomas Pleydell of Shrivenham. This Pleydell family is an ancient one and had an estate in Coleshill which they inherited from the family which took their name from the place, and possessed this estate as early as the reign of Edward I. We constantly meet with William de Coleshill and other members of the family, occupying positions of trust and importance in the early records of the county. In the south transept of the church, built by Thomas Pleydell, there is a tablet showing his Will and a genealogical account of the family. The elder branch of the Pleydells lived at Shrivenham ; the younger resided here till the time of Queen Elizabeth, when Anthony Pleydell died without issue, and the Shrivenham branch inherited the estate.

Thomas Pleydell who married Sir George Pratt's sister was the grandfather of Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell, Bart., whose only daughter and heiress, Harriet, married the Hon. William Bouverie, Viscount Folkestone and Baron Longford, and afterwards created Baron Pleydell Bouverie of Coleshill 2nd Earl of Radnor in 1765 ; and thus the names of Pleydell and Bouverie were conjoined, and Coleshill manor passed to the Earl of Radnor, whose principal seat is Longford Castle, near Salisbury.

The builder of the house was Margaret, the wife of Sir George Pratt. It is one of the best works of Inigo Jones, who at the same time was building the south side of Wilton House. Aubrey states that being then very old, he could not be at Wilton in person, but left the superintendence of the work to his kinsman and assistant Webb. Possibly the same thing occurred here. One of the great attractions of the house is that it has remained unchanged since it was built, at least as regards the exterior and the principal parts of the interior. We notice the simple, dignified and imposing character of the

exterior, the doorway with its handsome flight of steps, the windows with their bold casings, the cornice at the foot of the sloping roof which has dormer windows, and the handsome chimneys. The interior is most charming and pleasing. We notice the entrance with the grand staircase, the niches in the wall (I have read somewhere a legend that when evil threatens the family nine spectral cats take up their seats on these nine niches) and the handsome doors with fine casings and pediments. A double staircase leads to the gallery with balustrades of unusual form and wreaths of fruit and flowers. The ceilings are the most important feature of the internal decoration and differ much in character. The mantelpieces have coupled Ionic columns. There are many interesting family portraits and beautiful old furniture, while the gardens and grounds are very delightful. It is difficult to tear oneself away from such a beautiful old English home.

On the other side of the road we discover the church, in front of which stands the village cross. It is dedicated to St. Faith, and has been partially rebuilt. The old chantry founded by Thomas Pleydell in 1499 has disappeared, and in its place Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell in 1787 built the present south chapel, containing the family pews. On a brass appears the request of the founder of the chantry :



Pray
for the Sowles
of

Thomas
Pleydell
Agnes

Isabella
his Mother
Rose

and

his Wyfe
William
his Father

his daughter
and all
Crysten Sowles.

He called his chantry the chapel of Salutation of the Blessed

Virgin. The older parts of the church are the arcades of the nave which date back to the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century. There are several interesting monuments of members of the great families who have lived and reigned at Coleshill, and whose names I have already mentioned, including a sculptured figure of the "Honorable, prudent and pious Sir Henry Pratt, who by God's providence acquired ye eminence of sheriffe and alderman of London and dignity of knight and baronet. Hee lived 75 years and deceased ye 6 day of Aprill 1647. Pheenix Moriendo revivescit." The east window contains some excellent glass that was brought from Angers in 1787.

We pass out into the sunlight and descend the hill towards the bridge that spans the Cole, the Lenta of the old chronicles and maps, and before us stands out boldly the church and little town of Highworth. We pass by the old tithe barn of fourteenth century date, somewhat similar to that at Great Coxwell, though much smaller, and then approach the church, a noble Perpendicular building with some misericords and stalls and an Elizabethan pulpit. It has a very fine mediæval chalice and paten dated 1534. Round the chalice is inscribed the legend: BEATE QUI AUDIUNT VERBUM DEI UT CUSTODIANT ILLUD, and on the base a figure of our Lord with the words IHU.XRE. FILI DEI MISERERE NOBIS. It is a fine, dignified church, this St. Michael's, Highworth. The town has little history, save in the time of the Great Civil War, when the church was garrisoned for the king and captured by Fairfax in 1645. The church was bombarded, and one of the cannon balls remains "to witness if I lie." The historian tells us that "the soldiers had good booty in the church, took seventy prisoners and eighty arms." Some years ago the bodies of many Roundhead soldiers were discovered pointing to a subsequent skirmish in which they had suffered heavy losses. Highworth must have suffered severely in these engagements, as there are few houses that date from a period earlier than the

Civil War, and this cannot be due to "modern improvements," as the march of progress is not very rapid in the old town.

An interesting prolongation of this little tour can be made by going to Shrivenham, which we used to be told signified Sherriff's home, but Dr. Skeat calls it "Scrifena's enclosure," and another authority pronounces it to be unintelligible. It is a pretty village with a handsome church, of which the central embattled tower of fifteenth century date is the principal feature. The rest of the building was erected in Jacobean times. It is remarkable for the large number of monuments it contains in memory of the Barrington family, the Viscount Barringtons, whose seat is at Beckett House in this parish, having been long connected with the place as lords of the manor. The first Viscount's name was John Shute who was the adopted heir of John Wildman, the son of Sir John Wildman, Alderman of the City of London and postmaster-general who died in 1693. Sir John belonged to the Anabaptist persuasion, and suffered a long period of imprisonment in the Isle of Scilly during the reign of Charles II, in whose captivity his son with filial piety shared. At the Revolution with the advent of William III his fortunes changed, and he obtained his knighthood and other dignities. Lyson quotes the Alderman's humble Will, whereby he directed "that if his executors should think fit there should be some stone of small price set near his ashes, to signify, without foolish flattery, to his posterity, that in that age lived a man who spent the best part of his days in prison, without crimes, being conscious of no offence towards man, for that he so loved God that he could serve no man's will, and wished the liberty and happiness of his country and of all mankind." A very proper sentiment!

John Shute, the adopted heir of John Wildman, was a barrister of the Inner Temple and was fortunate enough to become the heir of Francis Barrington, whose name and arms he took. He distinguished himself as a politician and Pres-

byterian writer. He had a family of brilliant sons. The eldest sat in Parliament thirty-nine years and occupied several government offices. Another was Bishop of Durham. Daines Barrington, K.C., was the well-known antiquary. A large white standard captured by the Hon. Samuel Barrington, Admiral of the White, from the "Count St. Florentine," when he commanded the *Achilles* hangs near the family pew, and the verses on his monument were written by Hannah Moore.

Here rests the Hero, who, in glory's page,
 Wrote his fair deeds for more than half an age.
 Here rests the Patriot, who for England's good,
 Each toil encountered, and each clime withstood ;
 Here rests the Christian, his the loftier theme,
 To seize the conquest, yet renounce the fame.
 He, when his arm St. Lucia's trophies boasts,
 Ascribes the glory to the Lord of Hosts ;
 And when the harder task remain'd behind
 The passive courage and the will resign'd,
 Patient the veteran victor yields his breath
 Secure to Him who conquered sin and death.

The manor of Shrivenham has had a long and distinguished history, to record which I have no space. We must take the north-eastern road which conducts us past Beckett House and its beautiful park. It is an ancient place though the house is modern and was built in 1834 in the Elizabethan style by an architect named Atkinson. It is mentioned in Domesday, was called Becote, and belonged to the Earl of Evreux. King John sometimes lived here. In the time of Edward III the de Becotes held it by the service of coming before the king whenever in his progress he should pass by Fowyeare's Mill, in Shrivenham, showing him two white capons and saying "*Ecce Domine istos duos Capones quos alias habebitis sed non nunc,*" which barbarous Latin seems to signify: "Behold, my Lord, these two capons which you shall have another time, but not now," certainly a somewhat tantalizing offer. The house is not usually shown to the public

but it contains some valuable treasures including portraits and Charles I's chess board and men.

Our way lies through Watchfield, a hamlet with a modern church, and thus over an undulating road back to Faringdon, where with weary limbs we rest in the comfortable beds of the "Crown" or the "Bell."

* * * * *

For our next day's excursion I should like to conduct you to Buckland by the old road, the highway to Abingdon and Oxford along which the wains and packhorses of the merchant clothiers and woolmen wended in their journeys to London from the west country. We should pass by Wadley House, the home of the Untons of whom I have told you, and after journeying three and a half miles find ourselves in the charming village of Buckland, the home of the Throckmortons, which has a very interesting church. Thence we strike northwards through Tadpole, cross the "Stripling Thames," and enter the old town of Bampton, an old-world place where many ancient customs linger on, and where we are transported into a world that existed centuries ago. There are those who assert that it was to this place St. Frideswide fled when she was pursued by Algar King of Mercia from her nunnery at Oxford. I have a book on the *History of Bampton*, by the Rev. Dr. Giles, published in 1848, but there is no space left for me to tell the story of the town here. It is most worthy of a visit. In my book on *Old English Customs* I have recorded the Whitsuntide revels that take place here with the old songs and tunes that the rustics sing. In this old-world place nothing changes, and not even the war can kill its modes and manners and customs.

From Bampton we return to Faringdon through Clanford crossing the Thames at Radcot Bridge, where we can rest awhile and muse on the battles that were fought there to which allusion has already been made, and see the "gallant" Earl of Oxford plunging his horse into the stream and escaping

in spite of the shower of arrows that glanced off his coat of mail, or the armies of Charles and Cromwell fighting on the narrow roadway. Gone are the visions! Silence reigns, save the hum of countless insects, and the splash of a timid



Radcot Bridge

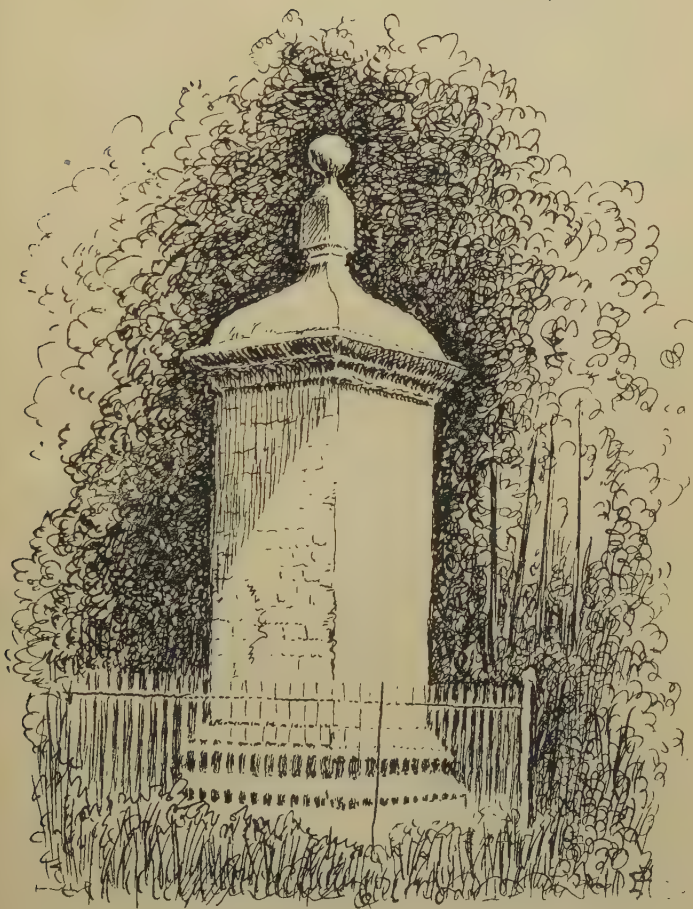
moorhen as she seeks her nest, and the lap of the Thames stream against the old stonework of the bridge that sleeps and dreams of turbulent days gone by, when it, too, played a part in the making of English history. So we trudge on back to Faringdon,



III

From Faringdon to Fairford

WE start again upon our forward pilgrimage, going westward towards the favoured county of Gloucester and the Cotswolds. Three miles beyond Faringdon is the little village of Burcot, anciently known as Burwardescot, or the cottage of a man named Burgward. The humble dwelling of this Saxon has grown into the beautiful mansion of Lord Faringdon, which was built by Mr. Edward Loveden at the end of the eighteenth century. The brothers Adams were employed in its construction and decoration, and there are some charming mantelpieces designed by them. The house is situated in a very beautiful park, and the deer browse under the trees, and there are two large lakes, one being spanned by a handsome bridge. Everywhere in the village the hand of the generous squire, known till recently, when he was created Lord Faringdon, as Sir Alexander Henderson, Bart., is observable. In the church which was built mainly in the thirteenth century, though the late Norman arch with its chevron moulding bespeaks an earlier construction, there is a Burne-Jones's east window and an oak lych-gate, and in the village a reading-room given by him. Burcot has played an important part in the story of Berkshire agriculture, Mr. Loveden, who built Burcot House being a great promoter thereof. There was a Burcot wharf on the river which was the scene of a great cheese-making industry, and a hive of enterprise. He built large warehouses for the reception of



Four Shire Stone

cheese, and these were rented by the cheesemongers of London, and from this little village no less than two to three thousand tons of cheese were annually sent down the Thames. Mr. Loveden was a very enlightened and ingenious squire, and wrought many improvements in agricultural implements and in stock. Lord Faringdon carries on its traditions and his stud farm for shire horses is one of the best in the county.

There is much to distract us from our regular course. A short distance to the left is Inglesham, a disused ancient church with mediæval screens and old woodwork, in appearance much the same as before the Reformation dawned, or when the Cistercian monks, to whom King John gave it, celebrated mass within its walls. It earned the admiration of William Morris, who considered it to be "a lovely little building, like Kelmscott for size and style, but handsome and with more old things left in it." There is Kelmscott also, as the crow flies two miles to the right of our course, on the banks of the Thames on the Oxfordshire side, where William Morris lived and immortalized its name by his famous printing press. It is a fine old house, this manor house, where the poet, artist and dreamer lived, built in Elizabethan times with mullioned windows and high gables, great beams, and yews clipped by this prince of craftsmen. His spirit seems to haunt the place he loved so well, and his widow guards it with loving care, preserving with reverence the tasteful hangings, the tapestry, the old furniture, the garden and its flowers where another kindred soul, Dante Gabriel Rossetti lived and communed with him and liked to stray and muse upon the river bank. Archdeacon Hutton and other writers see in Kelmscott scenes sketched in Morris's socialist dream, *News of Nowhere*, and think that his description of the church in that book resembles that in this village: "A simple little building with one aisle divided from the nave by three round arches, a chancel, and a rather roomy transept for so small a building, the windows mostly of the graceful Oxfordshire



Helmscott, William Morris Tomb

fourteenth century type. There was no modern architectural decoration in it ; it looked as if none had been attempted since the Puritans whitewashed the mediæval saints and histories on the wall." This description, however, does not quite tally with St. George's, Kelmscott, which is cruciform and has a thirteenth century central bell-cote, and two small



Lechlade

transepts, though three Norman arches do separate the nave from a very narrow north aisle. Here the poet dreamed and thought out his "Earthly Paradise," and many would say that the village not unjustly claims the same title.

But we must pass on to Lechlade which is in Gloucestershire. The crossing of the river Thames is close to St. John's Lock, near the juncture of the "stripling Thames" and the river Cole. Just across the river is an inn with an attractive name,

"The Trout." Thames trout make a savoury dish and furnish good sport in the catching of them, and here the Leach stream joins the Thames, and there is an old bridge called St. John's Bridge, one of the oldest bridges that spans the river. It was doubtless built by the Black Canons who had a priory in the thirteenth century founded by Lady Isabel de Ferrers, and dedicated to St. John Baptist. Indeed the "Trout Inn" in former days bore the saint's name. The bridge has three arches and had a bridge chapel. It also has a neighbour with a single span known as the Ha'penny Bridge. Here we cross the river and find ourselves in Gloucestershire, and the graceful spire of Lechlade church guides us onward and murmurs a *sursum corda*.

Mr. E. V. Lucas in one of his charming *causeries* refers to the grey old town, its fourteenth century church, "a praty old village," as Leland calls it, with "a pratie pyramis of stone at the west end of the church"; and he says that he would have enjoyed his visit much more if he had known that Shelley once lived at Lechlade. He gathered this information from a recent book styled *A Literary Pilgrimage*; but he might have known this from a study of the poet's works. Amongst his poems is a very charming one on "A summer-evening churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire," which he visited with Mary, Charles Clairmont and the poet Peacock in 1815. The well-known poem begins:

The wind has swept from the wider atmosphere
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray,
 And pallid evening twines her beaming hair
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:
 Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurist glen.

They breathe their spells towards departing day,
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars and sea;
 Light, sound, and motion, own the potent sway,
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Shelley's companion, Thomas Peacock, was a true and melodious poet, and loved the "crystal waters" and "sedge-crowned genius" of our stately Thames. He, too, has immortalized Lechlade when he sang of the beauties of the river :

Now peaceful hamlets wandering through
And fields in beauty ever new,
Where Lechlade sees thy current strong
First waft the unlabouring bark along ;
Thy copious waters hold their sway
Tow'rds Radcote's arches old and grey,
Where triumphed erst the rebel host,
When hapless Richard's hopes were lost,
And Oxford sought, with humbled pride,
Existence from thy guardian tide.

It is a fair old town, this Lechlade, a place to dream in on a summer's day, with memories of the old wool merchants and clothiers who made their fortunes out of the rich fleeces of the Cotswold sheep, and loved to give God thanks by spending their wealth on building or beautifying their parish church, or founding hospitals for the benefit of their poorer neighbours. Such was John Twinyhoe, whose brass may be seen in Lechlade church, the founder of the chantry of St. Blaise, the patron saint of woolmen, at the beginning of the sixteenth century ; and John Townshend, wool merchant, who died in 1458. His brass effigy remains, though some one has robbed it of its inscription. In his time the church was being rebuilt. There is a curious sculpture on the north wall, somewhat barbarously mutilated, representing a bishop baptizing. Out of his mouth proceeds a scroll with the words :—*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen.* A second chantry existed in the church that was founded with the funds derived from the dissolved hospital of St. John Baptist.

About four miles westward is the tower of Fairford, famous for its windows all the world over. Apart from its wealth

of old glass it is an interesting and ancient market town with beautiful houses, a wide open market place in front of Tame's glorious church, and a history that goes back to very early times. There are some prehistoric barrows in the parish, the spoils of which are preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. There is a tragic story of the Saxon owner just before the Norman Conquest, Bhrictic, Earl of Gloucester, who was sent as ambassador to the court of Earl Baldwin of Flanders, where Baldwin's daughter, Maud, fell in love with him. However he did not requite her affection, and mortified by his rejection, her slighted love turned to hate, and when she became the wife of William the Conqueror she vowed vengeance on the scorner of her charms. He was seized, his estates confiscated, and some dark deed of murder sealed his fate at Winchester, and was covered by the euphemism of the chronicle, "privately buried." Leland described Fairford as "a praty uplandish Toune, and much of it longith with the Personage to Tewkesbyri-Abbay. It never florished afore the Cumming of the Tames on to it."

The Earls of Warwick had an old manor house here near the church, called Beauchamp and Warwick Court. This was pulled down by Andrew Barker in the seventeenth century, who with the materials built a new house north of the church. But the church and its glass are the chief attractions of the town; and many hours would be needed thoroughly to examine all their details of symbolism and artistic beauty. The case in which these jewels are enshrined is sufficiently worthy of attention. Leland says that "the fair new church at Fairford was begun by John Tame and Edmund Tame finished it." Its date is about the year 1490 and it is a fine specimen of Perpendicular architecture. There is a grand central tower, a chancel with aisles, a nave with clerestory and aisles and a southern porch. There are evidences that in rebuilding the church Tame retained some portions of the earlier edifice;

e.g. the Early English character of the tower arches and the ball-flower moulding, sure indication of fourteenth century work. The founder's tomb is happily preserved in all its beauty. It is a table monument of marble with effigies of himself in armour and his wife Alice, and the inscription :

**If for Thus love pray for me
I may not pray—nowe pray ye
With a Pater Noster et an Ave
That my paynys Relessed may be.**

On a blue marble slab are brasses of Sir Edmund Tame, Knt., son of John, who died in 1534, and of his two wives and five children. The screens, choir stalls with misericords, traces of mural paintings, and much else will attract the attention of the ecclesiologist. Then there are the windows !

Every one knows the story which is thus told by Thomas Dugdale in his *Curiosities of Great Britain* :

“ John Tame, a merchant of a respectable family, settled in London where several of them had served the office of sheriff, had the good fortune to take a vessel bound for Rome, laden with painted glass, which he brought to England. Having determined to erect a building to receive this glass he made choice of Fairford, where he had resided some time, for the purpose, and having purchased the manor of Henry VII, he commenced the church in 1493 ; but, dying soon afterwards, it was completed by his son, Sir Edmund Tame, Knt.”

This is entirely a myth. The whole series of twenty-eight windows is evidently the design of one mind, and the design was drawn up for a church containing just this number of windows in just these positions. The glass was prepared for the church, not the church for the glass. It has in no case been cut down to fit the stonework. There are Flemish faces, Flemish buildings and architectural details, in many parts of the windows ; but there are other details which are

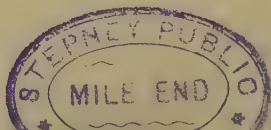
distinctly English. The Flemish features may be accounted for by the presence of some foreign artists amongst those who produced these wonderful works of art. Albrecht Dürer has been said to have been the artist ; but dates are awkward things, and he was only nineteen years of age when this church was begun, and his mannerisms of drawing are everywhere absent. Recently they have been attributed to a Flemish artist, T. Aeps, who lived from 1480 to 1528, and who signed his drawings with an A and the figure of an ape, and there is certainly an A on some parts of the windows and an ape bearing a shield. But again dates are stubborn facts, as he could only have been ten years old when these windows were made. When we look at the splendid work of English artists, such as Barnard Flower, in the glass at King's College, Cambridge, we know that there were plenty of Englishmen who could have done this work, and it may be assumed without much doubt that these Fairford windows were produced by native artists.

When I first saw these windows in 1872 much of the glass was misplaced and confused. During the troubles of the Civil War William Oldysworth, the Impropriator, fearing its destruction, caused the whole to be taken down and concealed. It was replaced in happier days somewhat carelessly, parts being upside down and inside out, and it was left to the present vicar, Canon Carbonell, to piece together the scattered parts and restore the windows, as far as possible, to their original condition. Too much credit cannot be given to him for his patient and very arduous toil, and his name ought ever to be associated with the church and windows he loves. The glass has passed through various vicissitudes. A heavy storm in 1703 blew in some of the west windows, stonework and all. About 1850 some was sent away to be "restored," and it softly and suddenly vanished away and was never met with again, until Canon Carbonell found some fragments of it in Birmingham and London; and even some were dis-

covered in a museum in Belgium and have now possibly made a further migration to Berlin.

It would take far too long to record the whole scheme of these wondrous windows. The best account of them was written by the vicar for the American Journal *Christian Art* for October, 1908.

Part IV
THE COTSWOLD COUNTRY



From Fairford to Cirencester

F AIRFORD may be said to lie at the foot of the Cotswolds country which is, perhaps, a little undefinable in extent, its delightful characteristics spreading out into districts that are not usually considered to be included in that favoured region. The true Cotswolds extend from Broadway to Bath and from Birdlip to Burford ; but even the eastern parts of Oxfordshire claim the right to share its honours. " Cotswold, that great King of Shepherds," as Drayton call it, looks proudly down upon the lovely Severn Valley, and proclaims the story of its past, the waves of conquest that have passed over it, the fierce battles that have raged, the piping times of peace and prosperity that have gladdened its old heart, the building of minsters and of goodly houses, for which its own native stone, the oolite limestone, provided the material. Cotswold Downs tell of the rich fleeces of their sheep that brought wealth to the old clothiers and merchants of Stroud, Lechlade, Cirencester, Fairford, and a score of other towns which now sleep peacefully in their old age. Paleolithic and Neolithic folk have left their traces and the polished and neatly chipped flints of the latter, the usual arrow-heads, knives, axes and hammers have been found in the Cotswold meadows, while they buried their dead in the long barrows at Uley, Amberley, Birdlip, Bisley and a score of other places. Round barrows of the Celtic tribes, 150 in number, have been discovered in this region, and their pit-dwellings near Cheltenham

and Stroud ; while their language is preserved in the name of many a hill and river, scarcely altered by successive waves of conquest. Traces of Roman conquest are seen everywhere. Camps crown each commanding height, you can see these relics of Roman rule at Painswick, Leckhampton, Willersby, Stanton, Charlton Abbot, Birdlip, Haresfield, Dyrham, Lansdown, and at many other sites.

The old capital of the Cotswolds, Cirencester, was connected by four great Roman roads with other important places. The Ermine Street led over the steep Birdlip Hill northward to Gloucester (Glevum), and thence to Caerleon and Caerwent, and southward to Silchester and London. The Acman Street, or Southern Fosseway, led to Bath and Exeter. Bath (Aqua Solis) was a fashionable watering-place for rheumatic Romans, who also frequented Ad Aquas, now known as Wells. The Northern Fosseway, or Akeman Street, passed through Northleach, Stow-on-the-Wold, Bourton-on-the-Water and Moreton-in-the-Marsh ; and thence to York and Lincoln, and besides these there was the Icknield Way, whose acquaintance we have made already in our travels, joining the Fosseway and the Whiteway, leading to Chedworth and Withington.

Along these roads were country houses and farms. Chedworth and Woodchester are splendid examples of Roman villas. They were built around a square courtyard, and had beautiful tessellated floors, and rooms heated by hypocausts. Woodchester had two courts and was adorned with much decorative ornament. Other important villas have been discovered at Witcombe, Spoonley, Lydney, Tockington and Rodmarton.

I cannot stay to tell the story of the Saxon conquest, of the battles that were fought, of the marauding Vikings, of the advent of Norman William, and of the stirring scenes upon which the Cotswolds have calmly gazed. The highest point of these hills reaches 1,134 feet and was formerly rough moorland. The air is sharp and bracing on its breezy uplands.

Richard Jefferies used to say that "lands of gold have been found, and lands of spices and precious merchandise; but this is the land of health." It is a land of silver trout streams and of valleys nestling under limestone hills. Wild flowers flourish on the downs; no sounds of railway trains break the sweet solitudes, nor factory chimneys belch forth clouds of black smoke. It is a land of peace, even when the awful thunder of war is sounding forth in all lands.

It is time to take the road again and sally forth from Fairford by the western road that leads to Cirencester. We pass through the pretty village of Maisey Hampton, where the old rectory house dates back to Elizabethan times. In 1872 the church underwent a "restoration" which Dr. Cox describes as "mischievous." The Maisey family held the manor until the end of the thirteenth century, when it passed by the marriage of Eva Maisey to Lord St. Maur. Her tomb is on the north side of the sanctuary and was probably used as an Easter sepulchre. This lady was doubtless the refounder of the church which was rebuilt in her time, though parts of the earlier structure remain in the tower and lancet windows of the nave. The Jacobean lectern, inscribed "Christian Jackets, 1622," has chains by which some old Bible was formerly fastened, and there is some old glass in the east window. The monument of an old court doctor is curious. It is that of Doctor James Vault, his two wives and children. James I refused to entrust his health to his charge. The inscription (with modernized spelling) is as follows:

Stay mortal, stay, and look upon
The language of a speaking stone;
Nor wonder if't, that he should give
Speech to a stone; who bid men live
When nature bid them die; 't is he
By whom I live! nôt he by me.
'Tis said, I may again be dumb
I've spoke enough to tell whose Tomb
This is: and thou mayest grieving know,
That none but VAULX can lie below.

So the good doctor vaunts his medical skill even in death.

A little further is Poulton, which lacks interest now that its old fourteenth century church has given way to a brand new building. There was a priory here of Gilbertine canons, founded by Sir Thomas Seymour in 1347. Next we find the three Ampneys: Ampney St. Peter, Ampney St. Mary, and Ampney Crucis; and there is yet another, Down Ampney, near Latton, that is off our track. All these have interesting churches, especially that of Ampney Crucis, dedicated to the Holy Rood, which has a Saxon doorway, a mediæval stone pulpit and some effaced mural paintings. The tympanum of the north doorway of Ampney St. Mary is remarkable, and appears in Mr. Charles E. Keyser's collection of "Norman doorways and their sculptured Tympana." It is quite worth journeying to Down Ampney to visit the beautifully restored church and the Tudor mansion of the Hungerfords, now owned by Lord St. Germans. The Hungerfords played a great part in our national history, and form a connecting link between Gloucestershire and Berkshire, as the heiress of Sir Anthony Hungerford married into a good old Berkshire family, the Dunches of Little Wittenham; but they, too, with their old manor house have passed away, and even their monuments have been pillaged and destroyed. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Two miles and a half from Ampney Crucis stands Cirencester, the capital of the Cotswold district, a town of great fame and interest.

Woe to the daring and luckless "foreigner" who in the ears of the men of Gloucestershire presumes to name this town anything but "Ciceter!" Yet this is only a fifteenth century corruption, quite a modern affair. You may find it so spelt in the chronicles of William of Worcester, who wrote in 1470, and there was a man who made his will at that period who was not very sure of his spelling and wrote Cisetre. But if you go further back you will find Cyncester and Cyrenceastre;

and you know well that the name preserves the original Cerin or Churn, which name the Celts gave to the stream that laves the town. The Romans called it Corinium, or the Corinium of the Dobuni, and according to the itineraries we may conclude that it was sometimes known as Durscornovium.

We have already recorded the several Roman roads that ran through the town, and within the Roman walls that girt the place there were streets dividing it into *insulæ* lined by houses. In the centre of the town stood a noble basilica, or town hall, similar to that discovered at Silchester. It was 320 feet in length and had an apse 80 feet in width at its western end, and a portico at the east. Corinthian pillars supported the roof dividing it into aisles. It has been stated that Roman Cirencester was vastly greater than the present town, but this, I am told, is not now true. Leland who visited the place in the time of Henry VIII informs us that in his day the Roman wall was two miles in circumference. The town lacked not its games and sports that took place in an amphitheatre outside the walls, which is now known as the Bull Ring. Cirencester is a paradise for antiquaries, especially for students of Roman antiquities. Everywhere discoveries have been made, and all kinds of treasures have been found, and no one knows when new "finds" may turn up, and reveal new facts about the former inhabitants of this wonderful treasure-house. Moreover it has an admirable museum wherein these treasures are stored for the delectation and instruction of those who love to picture to themselves the past glories of the old town, and to imagine themselves surrounded by toga-clad Romans and Romano-British folk, by stalwart legionaries, and the sellers of amphoræ and pottery, the makers of bronze statuettes, enamelled fibulæ, the painters and glass-makers, and all the crowds of artistic workmen who fashioned the objects we love to collect for our museums. The town has been most fortunate in possessing several

diligent antiquaries who have loved to gather together the stores of Roman antiquities which the earth has preserved for them ; amongst these we may mention Mr. Braveder, the late Mr. Wilfrid Cripps, and Dr. A. H. Church, F.R.S., who has described so well the contents of the Cirencester museum.

It is beyond our purpose to describe these, an inspection of which throws much light on the lives of the men and women who lived in this Gloucestershire town sixteen or seventeen centuries ago. That grand tessellated pavement in the centre of the room is a witness of the artistic skill of the Roman people of this western district. The goddess Flora looks out from a chaplet of flowers, having a swallow perched on her left shoulder. Silenus rides his ass ; Ceres is adorned with a corn-decked wreath ; Actæon is being hunted by his hounds ; Pomona is gathering grapes, and Bacchus sits astride his panther. It is a very complete picture of mythological subjects, the noble Roman who placed it in his dwelling loving to surround himself with the myths and legends of his race in which he only half believed. We like to find some human interest in the lifeless objects that have been stored so long ; to feel a friendship for Montanus the potter who inscribed his name on the bowl that he made, for the good horse-soldier Dunnicus, who served sixteen years in the army and left money to his heirs Fulvius Natalis and Flavius Bitucus, who erected a stone to his memory. Sextus Valerius Genialis, too, must have been a brave soldier who served twenty years in his legion and died at the early age of forty. Such are some of the ghosts that walk in the good town of Cirencester.

It would be vain to attempt to record here, even in outline, its history. Ever since Canute's reign every event of importance seems to have been connected with it. It has its castle that was destroyed by Stephen, and the name of Castle Street seems its only record. Kings held their courts here. The town had exciting times when Henry IV held

the throne, and as Shakespeare tells in his Play *Richard II* Act V, Scene 6) :

The rebels have consumed with fire
Our town of Cisiter in Gloucestershire.

But the men of the town captured and beheaded the Duke of Surrey and the Earl of Salisbury, and in return for this service the king granted to them portions of the rebel's goods, deer from the forest of Braydon and wine from the port of Bristol, as well as a charter for a guild merchant, which was subsequently rescinded by his son at the demand of the Abbot of Cirencester. As in most towns where there was a powerful abbey and an ambitious body of citizens, there was constant strife between them which only ended with the suppression and dissolution of the monastery. Cirencester was the scene of much fighting during the Civil War. But we are principally concerned now with the things that remain, that we can see with our own eyes without plunging deeply into the buried past.

It is a town of much interest. The view of the noble tower of the church, with its curious porch and town hall, and its wide market place is very striking. Old gabled houses still stand in its highways and byways, and much history lurks in the names of its streets. Here is Dollar Street. Surely Americans must have formed a colony here ; but no—it is really Dole Hall Street, the place where the poor folk used to come to the good monks to receive their doles, such as you may receive this day at the gate of the Holy Cross at Winchester as a tired wayfarer, a little piece of bread and a small horn of ale. Cecily Hill takes its name from St. Cecilia, whose chapel stood in a street that now bears the title of Inchthorpe Street. Thomas Street takes its name from the ancient St. Thomas's Hospital. There was once a hospital for lepers dedicated to St. Laurence, the site of which is marked by the name of Spitalgate, and the relics of St. John's Hospital, founded by

Henry I, still remain, and was recently restored and is used as an almshouse.

Little is left of the once powerful abbey which had a magnificent minster, a noble cloister court and other buildings, founded by Henry I in 1117. Soon after the dissolution it was purchased from Queen Elizabeth by her physician, Dr. Richard Master, who pulled down the abbey buildings and erected a house for himself out of the materials. The gateway of the abbey remains and there are also some low monastic walls that mark the boundary of the park. During the Civil War period Charles I was twice received by his devoted subject, Sir William Master. This house was pulled down about the year 1780, when the present house was erected.

The chief glory of Cirencester is its noble church, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. There was probably a church here in Roman times, and certainly in Saxon days, of which traces have been discovered. When the abbey was being built in Henry I's time, masons were also busy erecting a Norman edifice, of which there are some remains. But the men of Cirencester were never content and were always striving after better things, improving, rebuilding, until they had produced the present noble building, the largest parish church in the county and worthy to rank as a cathedral. They began in the thirteenth century with the east end. The Decorated period saw the nave aisles widened and ere the fourteenth century dawned the great west tower arose, and chapels were added and a new font and stone pulpit reared in the fifteenth century. Visitors always notice the quaint figure of the blue-coat schoolboy who is perpetually asking for alms for the support of his school. The affection of the men of the town for their parish church has not waned, and great sums have been expended in modern times on its fabric.

Was it of this church that Ruskin wrote ?

" I used to feel as much awe in gazing at the buildings as on the hills, and could believe that God had done a greater work in breathing into

the narrowness of dust the mighty spirit by whom its haughty walls had been raised, and its burning legends written, than in lifting the rock of granite higher than the clouds of heaven, and veiling them with their various mantle of purple flower and shadowy pine."

Every stranger is struck with admiration by the lofty and beautiful old building that stands in front of the church facing the market place, and wonders what it can be. It was erected by the parishioners in 1500, assisted by Bishop Thomas Ruthall, of Durham, a native of the place. The beautiful archway in the centre is the church porch, the roof of which is a fine example of fern tracery. The upper rooms were used by the various guilds of the town, and in later times as the town hall. It fell into great disrepair at the beginning of the last century and was rebuilt stone by stone. Grotesque sculptured figures representing minstrels with various instruments appear on the exterior. One of these, supposed to be the lord of the feast, is arranged in a hunting dress, having a cap with feathers, a bugle horn and in his left hand an arrow, while in his right hand is a scroll with the legend, BE MERRY. Another series of sculptures represent Death, a monk, an abbot, a king, a prize-fighter with a sword and dagger, an angel, etc. These are supposed to depict characters in a Whitsun Ale festival or in some morality play.

There is much else to be seen in the old town, and close to it is the fine house of Lord Bathurst. It was built by Henry Danvers, Earl of Danby, whose story is told in *The Memoirs of the Danvers Family* by the late Dr. Montgomery. Sir Benjamin Bathurst purchased it in 1695 and his son, Lord Bathurst, the famous, who created this beautiful park, did much that deserves the praise of posterity. He was a great patron of authors and the intimate friend of Pope, Swift, Congreve, Gay, Prior, Sterne, and all the literary lights of his age. The park abounds in broad, smooth drives, magnificent avenues and charming woodland glades that cannot be disturbed by scorching cyclists or

rushing motor-car. At the entrance is the cricket ground. The drive known as the Broad is flanked by rows of chestnuts and leads straight to Sapperton. On the left is the Zigzag drive skirting the Deer Park. Here there is a monument to Queen Anne. Pope's seat tells of the frequent visits of the poet to his friend. In Pope's letters there are many allusions to his friendship with and his admiration for Earl Bathurst. He designed after the fashion of his day a picturesque "ruin," called the Wood House or Alfred's Hall. As lovers of antiquity we must not fail to see the high cross which was removed here from Cirencester market place and dates back to 1400 A.D. A little further we come to the Ten Rides, whence so many avenues extend and a fine prospect is obtained. The village of Sapperton is worthy of a visit. The manor house has gone, but in the church much of the woodwork is preserved. Charles I visited the manor house as the guest of Sir Henry Poole in 1644. It belonged to Sir Robert Atkyns, the famous county historian who died in 1711, and whose monument is in the church. The village looks down upon the beautiful Golden Valley with the Thames and Severn canal, "a band of silver drawn through this valley of gold," as the great novelist, Mr. Temple Thurston, aptly describes it. This canal has burrowed its way through a tunnel in the hill.

There are many interesting villages in the neighbourhood of Cirencester that ought to be visited. There is the charming little Norman church at Duntisbourne Rouse with a crypt below the chancel, the church at Daglingworth which belonged to the nuns of Godstow, and has some important Saxon sculptures representing the Crucifixion, our Lord in Judgment and St. Peter. Another sculpture of the Crucifixion is built on the outside wall of the chancel. A Roman altar is preserved in the vestry bearing a Latin inscription of which this is the translation: "Junia dedicated this to the goddess mother, and to the genius of this place." In the village are

the remains of the cell of the Godstow nuns and of their dovecote.

Chedworth is a picturesque village with its church of St. Andrew which was originally built in Norman times and possessed an elaborate fifteenth century stone pulpit. About a mile from the village is the well-known Roman villa discovered in 1866, one of the four finest examples in England.

Every lover of this district will have read Mr. J. A. Gibb's charming book *A Cotswold Village*, and mourned over the early death of that promising and delightful writer. This village, of which he wrote so affectionately, is Ablington, where he lived in the old manor house which was built in Elizabethan times by John Coxwell who placed this inscription over the door :

Plead Thou my cause, oh Lord,
By John Coxwell Ano Domeney. 1590.

The chancel has a very considerable amount of Saxon work and much else that is curious including a Saxon decorated stone of Scandinavian design. Near this is Bibury, one of the prettiest villages in the Cotswolds. It is in the Valley of the Coln and is much frequented by artists and anglers, who find comfortable quarters in the "Swan Hotel," that looks upon the old stone bridge spanning the stream. Bibury Court was built by Sir Thomas Sackville in 1623 and was designed by Inigo Jones.

In the Coln Valley there are several villages that take their names from the river. There are Coln St. Aldwyn, near Fairford, and Coln St. Denis and Coln Rogers, which lie near Chadworth. The first, Coln St. Aldwyn, takes its name from Aldwyn, Bishop of Worcester, in 844 A.D., and had a fine old Elizabethan manor house with a splendid old oak staircase. This was restored by Sir Michael Hicks Beach. It has on the front four picturesque gables and is a good example of a Cotswold house with its mullioned windows and drip-

stone over them, and from the terrace a delightful view is obtained of the richly wooded valley of the Coln. John Keble, the saintly author of the *Christian Year*, was vicar here from 1835 to his death in 1866. Coln St. Denis has a Norman church and in an adjoining hamlet is a barn built by Abbot Henry of Kingswood Abbey in the time of Edward I, and Coln Rogers has a church with some Saxon work.

We may not linger longer in the neighbourhood of the old capital of the Cotswolds, and we must take the road again to our next halting-place.

II

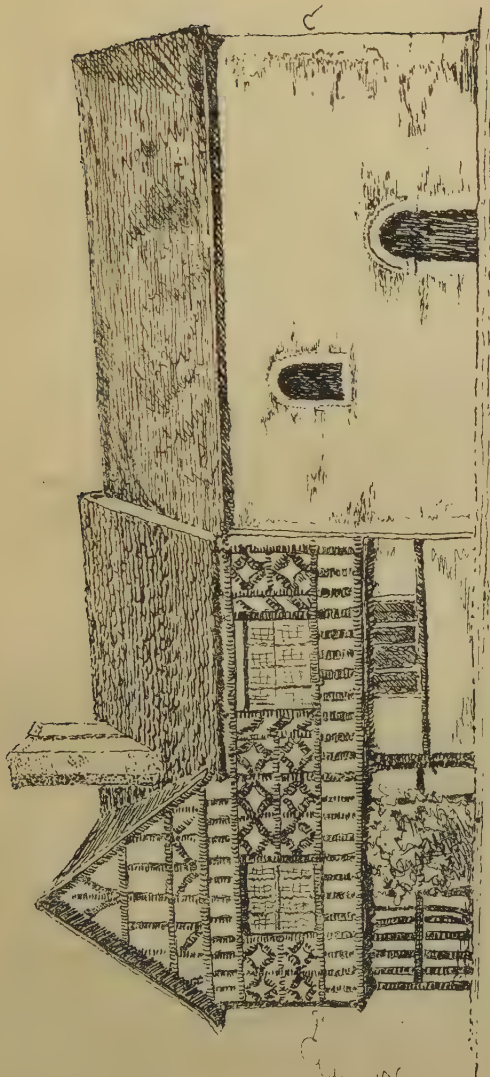
From Cirencester to Birdlip Hill

IF you would tread in the footsteps of the Roman legionaries, you must take the old north-western road from Cirencester and traverse the ancient Ermine Way that leads over the steep Birdlip Hill to Gloucester. The ten and a half miles do not present many features of interest, and are a trifle monotonous ; but you will be repaid for all your exertions by the splendid view that greets you when you have reached Birdlip. The prospect is extraordinarily fine, and I know of none more beautiful in the whole of England. The fertile valley of the Severn is spread out before you in a vast panorama. You can see the glorious tower of Gloucester Cathedral in the centre of the vale, the curious little hills of Churchdown and Robin's Wood guarding each side of the Ermine Way leading to the cathedral city. Tewkesbury and Worcester are in the distance. On the right the Malvern Hills form a background to the picture, and on the left the Dean Forest and the Welsh Hills tell of the proximity of the Celtic tribes who once made this vale their battle ground. Witcombe Woods near at hand contains the remains of a Roman villa. As Moses from the heights of Pisgah gazed upon the whole length of "the land that flowed with milk and honey," so perhaps our vision may be miraculously extended, so as to embrace all this lovely Cotswold country, a land of calm delight and pure joy, a land of rolling ridge and dipping combe, a land where man has reared some of the

sublimest triumphs of his art and skill and left behind him imperishable memories. We may not traverse at this time all the roads that lead us northwards and eastwards. But we will from Birdlip height just glance at the towns and villages that lie before us and sigh as Moses did when he was permitted to see the Promised Land, but was not allowed to go over thither.

A few miles away is Cowley Manor, a splendid Italian mansion (originally built in 1674) and garden, adorned with classic sculpture, where the Churn river swells into lakes and waterfalls and trout are plentiful. Its rooms bear the names of Italian cities, "Pisa," "Genoa," "Verona," and many another. Close by is the little Early English church, with Perpendicular tower and stone pulpit and other features that lack not interest.

Gloucester's fair city is too well known to be described here, and its story has been told in my *Memorials of Old Gloucestershire*. Deerhurst has much to detain us. It can boast of a Saxon church, the minster of an early monastery which was in existence in 804 A.D., and the Saxon chapel of Odda, lord of the manor in 1056. This was rediscovered so late as 1885. Both buildings deserve careful study, especially the former which contains the very remarkable Saxon font. But this village does not belong to the Cotswolds, nor does Tewkesbury, though its marvellous church of cathedral character, and its store of mediæval houses, invite us. All along the Evesham Vale there are pretty villages nestling at the foot of the hills. Bishop's Cleeve has a beautiful Norman church with a Norman porch which is somewhat uncommon. A priory was founded here by Prince Arthur of Mercia about 790 A.D. It was first known as Wednes Clive, and when it was attached to the Sec of Worcester it obtained its present name. The church was divided by a rood-screen, the eastern end being used as a collegiate church and the rest as the church of the parish. There were several altars



The Chapel is a small building with a steeply pitched roof and a gable end. The walls are made of rough stone or brick. There is a large arched doorway on the right side. The drawing is a perspective view from the front-left.

Saxon Chapel, Deerhurst

of which the Jesus altar was the chief. The central tower fell in 1696, and an inferior one was then erected. Over the porch is a parvis, which was used as a school a century ago. The schoolmaster was an artist, and made some drawings on the walls to illustrate his lessons—a lion, tiger, elephant, etc. A Roman camp looks down on the little village of Woolstone.

In several of these villages and in many towns in Gloucestershire there were some monastic institutions which gave rise to the proverb "As sure as there is God in Gloucestershire." There was one at Beckford, an alien priory or cell attached to a Normandy monastery, and subsequently assigned to Eton College, when these alien priories were suppressed by Henry V. The church there is remarkable for its sculptured tympana.

Evesham, also, is entirely a monastic town, and sprang up under the sheltering walls of the famous abbey.

A pretty burgh and such as Fancy loves
For bygone grandeurs.

Beneath the grass are hidden the vast foundations of one of the mightiest of our proud mediæval abbeys. It is difficult to imagine that in that field beside the church was once grouped a forest of tall columns bearing up lofty fretted roofs; that all around were altars all agleam with colour and with gold; that besides the many altars were once grouped chantries and tombs placed in memory of men great in the service of Church and State, that close to us were once stately cloisters, great monastic buildings, refectories, dormitories, chapter-house, chapels, infirmary, granaries, kitchens—all the varied piles of buildings which used to make up the hive of a great monastery. All have vanished, or nearly so.

Bishop Egwin of Worcester began to build this abbey, but the era of its greatest prosperity set in after the battle of Evesham, when Simon de Montford was slain and his body buried in the monastic church. There was his shrine to which



Evesham Bell Tower

were great pilgrimages, crowds flocking to lay their offerings there ; and riches poured into the treasury of the monks, who made great additions to their house and reared noble buildings.

All that is left are the piers of the great central tower, the cloister arch of Decorated work of great beauty erected in 1317, and the abbey fishponds. The bell tower is one of the glories of Evesham. It was built by the last abbot, Abbot Lichfield, and was not quite completed before the destruction of the great minster began.

At the corner of the market place there is a picturesque old house with gables and carved barge-boards and timber-framed arch, and we see the old Norman gateway, named Abbot Reginald's Gateway, after the name of its builder, who also erected part of the wall enclosing the monastic precincts. A timber-framed structure now stretches across the arcade, but a recent restoration has exposed the Norman columns which support the arch. The church house, always an interesting building in old towns and villages, wherein church ales and semi-ecclesiastical functions took place, has been restored. Passing under the arch we see the two churches in one churchyard—All Saint's and St. Lawrence. The former has some Norman work at the inner door of the porch, but its main construction is Decorated and Perpendicular. Its most interesting feature is the Lichfield Chapel, erected by the last abbot, whose initials and the arms of the abbey appear on escutcheons on the roof. The fan-tracery is especially noticeable, and the good modern glass. The church of St. Lawrence is entirely Perpendicular, and the chantry of Abbot Lichfield, with its fantastic vaulting, is a gem of English architecture.

Amongst the remains of the abbey buildings may be seen the almonry, the residence of the almoner, and in later times used as a gaol. An interesting stone lantern is preserved here. Another abbey gateway is near at hand, but little evidence

remains of its former Gothic work. Part of the old wall built by Abbot William de Chyryton early in the fourteenth century remains. In the town there is a much modernized town hall, and near it the old-fashioned Booth Hall, a half-timbered building, now used as shops and cottages, where formerly courts were held, including the Court of Pie-Powder, the usual accompaniment of every fair.

Bridge Street is one of the most attractive thoroughfares in the borough, with its quaint old house, the famous inn, "The Crown." The old house in Cowl Street was formerly the "White Hart Inn," which tells a curious Elizabethan story about "the fool and the ice," an incident supposed to be referred to by Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* (act iii, scene 3): "The fool slides over the ice that you should break."

The Queen Anne house in the High Street, with its wrought iron railings and brackets, called Dresden House, and Almswood, one of the oldest dwelling-houses in the town, are worthy of notice by the student of domestic architecture.

There is much in the neighbourhood of Evesham to delight the antiquary, many old-fashioned villages, manor houses, churches and inns, which are good to look upon. The old tithe-barn at Littleton of the fourteenth century, Wickhamford Manor, the home of Penelope Washington, whose tomb is in the adjoining church, the picturesque village of Cropthorne, the timbered houses at Norton and Harrington—all these contain many objects of antiquarian and artistic interest, and can easily be reached from Evesham.

III

Broadway, Winchcombe and Sudeley Castle

ABOUT six miles from Evesham is the village of Broadway, where strangers often come to worship at our Cotswold shrines. It has become in recent years the home of a colony of ardent lovers of antiquity, who have rescued from mean uses, and sometimes from still more barbaric modernizing, the delightful old houses which are its chief charm. In its mile-long hills, village street, and around the village green there are numerous early examples of the best productions of English domestic architecture. Mr. Oliver Baker has given an excellent account of these in the Worcestershire volume of my series on *The Memorials of the Counties of England*. One of the most striking is the grange of the abbots of Pershore, set in an old-fashioned garden, fragrant with herbs and gay with blossoms. Broadway for several centuries belonged to that abbey. The grange is a long grey building of dressed stone and rubble, the centre broken by two gabled transepts. One of these contains the chapel and is lighted by a fourteenth century window. There is a great hall with a wonderful roof. Unhappily the minstrel's gallery, the screen, buttery and kitchen have vanished; but there are many interesting chambers, including the abbot's parlour, and on the side of the hall there is a little secret aperture, which enabled the abbot to hear the conversation of the monks, lay-brethren and servants in the hall below. A

similar arrangement existed at the manor house of South Wraxall. Other interesting houses are the "Prior's Manse," the "Tudor House"; and perhaps the best of all is the "Lygon Arms Inn," a celebrated hostelry for more than three centuries. Over the main door appear the names of John and Ursula Trevis, with the date 1620, though some parts of the building are certainly earlier. On the mullion of a window have been recently found the dates 1586 and 1628 with initials. One room is called the "Cromwell Room," wherein Cromwell is believed to have slept before the battle of Worcester. Court Farm is a fine and delightfully unspoilt seventeenth century house, the residence of Mr. A. F. de Navarro, the husband of the charming actress whom we used to know as Miss Mary Anderson. Farms and cottages abound in this delightful village, all delightful examples of Cotswold building.

Another place nigh at hand is Chipping Campden, concerning which town much could be said. Few places can rival it for its beauty. It is one of the few perfect English survivals of the Middle Ages. As Mr. C. R. Ashbee has pointed out in the *Journal of Christian Art*, we have here an example of a consistent artistic tradition from very early times, ninth or tenth century, till the end of the eighteenth century, a tradition that has not yet exhausted itself. Many of the crafts, such as the masons, the builders and thatchers, have gone on from the time of Saxon Harold to our own day. Harold was lord of the manor before the Conquest, and there is an early arch in the building that was the mother church that dates back to that period. Chipping Campden denotes the presence of a market, and prior to the establishment of that in Domesday and the Saxon Charters, it was called Broad Campden. The Black Death played fearful havoc with its life. It must have been almost derelict, until in the reign of Richard II the Flemish wool-merchants settled here, and there was a wonderful revival of building. To this period belong

the great new church, the Woolstapler's Hall and Grevel's House, while the old mother church is turned into a domestic building, the Norman nave being cut horizontally across by a fourteenth century floor.

The church is a very striking example of early Perpendicular work. It has a noble tower, battlemented and pinnaced, rising to a height of 120 feet, a clerestoried nave with aisles, a south porch, built by Campden's great benefactor, Sir Baptist Hicks, who also gave the pulpit and lectern. Some very wicked "restoration" has been wrought here in 1884; the nave was re-roofed, the beautiful Gothic seatings thrown out, the walls scraped and pointed, and much other mischief done. In the church is the splendid brass to the memory of that famous wool-merchant, William Grevel and his wife. He died in 1401 and is described as *flos mercatorum totius Angliæ*. He is not alone. There are other worthy woolmen whose memories are immortalized here by "storied brass," William Welley (1450), John Barker (1480), William Gibbys (1484), who had three wives and thirteen children. There is also a fine alabaster tomb of Sir Baptist Hicks. He was a famous London merchant. Hicks Hall, his London house, is mentioned in all the old road books; from it the mileage of the northern roads from London was measured. He was Lord Mayor and purchased the manor of Campden; and being ennobled by James I, he took his title, Viscount Campden, from this town. He built a noble mansion here on the high ground overlooking the vale to the south of the church, which was destroyed by his grandson lest it should fall into the hands of the Roundheads. There is a curious coloured drawing of this, in the British Museum, showing the mansion with its forecourt and grounds and gardens. Only two pavilions, the entrance gate, and the almonry, remain to tell of its former magnificence.

The lovely little open market house was also the gift of this benefactor, and was saved from dilapidation by the

timely restoration of Mr. Ashbee. The High Street is charmingly curved. The town hall is a mediæval building, and there is a very pleasing variety in all these structures. No house closely resembles its neighbour. William Grevel's house is a delight and a joy to be gazed upon, and so are the almshouses, also the gift of Campden's great benefactor. The Campden Guild of Handicraft has done wonders in maintaining and developing the old English traditional workmanship.

Another charming Cotswold town is Winchcombe, which appears in Domesday as Wincelcumbe. The earliest mention of the place is in the year 787 A.D., when King Offa erected a nunnery here. Here in 798 Kenulph, King of Mercia, laid the foundation of a monastery. This became a college of seculars, was ravaged by the Danes, and restored by Oswald, Bishop of Worcester. It seems to have been an unfortunate house, as William of Malmesbury records that it suffered from a great storm and in 1151 was destroyed by fire, from which the town that had grown about it also suffered greatly. It soon arose from its ashes, and under the control of learned and pious abbots it became the centre of considerable religious and educational activity. It was dissolved in 1534. Its buildings were plundered. Nothing was known about the site until the year 1893, when Mr. Loftus Brock carefully surveyed the ground, and by excavations was able to trace the foundations and make a plan of the abbey.

During our civil wars Winchcombe suffered severely. In 1140 it was assaulted by Milo of Gloucester in the interests of the Empress Maud. The greater part of the town was burnt, and Milo carried off most of the inhabitants, whom he held in close custody until their ransoms had been paid. The town was defended by a castle, which stood on the south side of the present parish church, and, says Rudder, was called the "Ivy Castle, as appeared in the writings in Wincombe Abbey,

perhaps because the walls of it were covered with ivy." However, when Leland visited the town in the time of Henry VIII, no vestige of it remained, nor had the last prior ever seen it, "having only heard that there was such a fort, which stood about the east-north-east part of the borough." The decay of the borough after the close of the monastic *régime* appears to have been rapid, if one may judge from the preamble of the grant of a fair and market by Queen Elizabeth, which recites that the borough "is fallen into so great ruin and decay that its inhabitants are not able to support and repair it for the great poverty that reigns among them."

The town with its neighbour Sudeley Castle, played a great part in the Civil War of the seventeenth century, and saw much fighting. After that eventful period its only excitement has been caused by the illegal growing of tobacco, which once caused a small insurrection in the town, alluded to by Pepys in his Diary (September 19, 1667), wherein he states that "the Life-guard was sent to Winchcombe to spoil the tobacco there, which it seems the people there do plant contrary to law, and have always done so." They evidently agreed with the dictum that "the law was an ass," and I am not sure whether they were not right, as it destroyed an industry in England for the sake of the planters in Virginia.

The "George Inn" was in the days of monastic glories a pilgrim's hostel. There is a pilgrim's gallery facing the garden, and the archway bears the initials "R. K.," which stand for Richard Kyderminster, Abbot of Winchcombe. The number of inns in the town betoken that it was a place much frequented by travellers. There is the "White Hart," the "Pack Horse," the "Old Pack Horse," and a charming old inn called the "Old Corner Cupboard," which is characteristic of the Cotswold style.

The church is a fine Perpendicular building, all of one date, 1480. It was built by the last abbot, and consists of a chancel, nave with aisles, south porch and tower. There is no chancel

arch, and the rood-screen remains, but the rood-loft was taken down in 1700, when it was described as "the ladies' gallery over the screen." At the end of the fifteenth century the earlier church of St. Nicholas fell into decay, and the people made use of the abbey church. The monks, finding this arrangement inconvenient, helped them to build the present church. There is a clerestory with windows of four lights. In the sanctuary are beautifully carved sedilia and the fragments of a piscina. There used to be several altars, and the richly decorated porch remains with a chamber over it. The organ case is of the seventeenth century, and there is an alms-box with three locks of the time of Edward VI. The altar cloth is said to have been worked by Queen Katherine of Aragon, and there is a stone coffin of Kenelm, king and martyr, who was slain by his tutor on the Kent hills. Many legends are connected with this young son of Offa, King of Mercia, and one tells of the Pope singing mass at St. Peter's, when a white dove let fall a scroll on the altar, wherein was written in letters of gold :

In Clent in Cowbage Kenelm king-born
Lieth under a thorn,
His head off-shorn.

Whereupon the Pope sent to England, and the body was found and conveyed to Winchcombe, where a spring of water immediately sprang forth which still supplies the town.

Close to Winchcombe is Sudeley Castle, the noble home of Mr. H. Dent-Brocklehurst. It was in a condition of ruination for a long period after its sufferings during the Civil War, until the late Mrs. Dent restored it. There are slight remains of a Norman fortress, but the principal part of the castle was built by Ralph Botiler, Baron Sudeley, who was a famous warrior and "admiral on sea," fought in the French wars and used the spoils he won from the French for the rebuilding of his house. But his prosperity did not last long. He fought for the Red Rose of Lancaster, and when the Yorkist

Edward IV came to the throne, in order to save his head, he yielded Sudeley to the king. From this time the castle was held by constables. Sometimes it was granted to royal favourites, but it frequently reverted to the sovereign. Henry VIII's last queen, Katherine Parr, married Sir Thomas Seymour, who obtained a grant of Sudeley and began to restore the castle, building rooms for his wife on the south-east corner of the inner quadrangle. Here Katherine lived and died; her husband lost his head for treason on Tower Hill, and Sudeley passed to new owners. Queen Mary gave it to Sir Robert Bridges and created him Baron Chandos. During the Civil War it suffered much, and was alternately taken and retaken by the Royalists and Parliamentarians. Charles I stayed here for awhile. Lord Chandos was well-nigh ruined and his house made desolate. I need not follow the succession of owners further, save to note that the castle regained its beauty by the purchase of the property by the Dent family, and that it was splendidly restored by Mrs. Dent, the accomplished author of the *Annals of Winchcombe and Sudeley*. To this and to Canon Bazeley's paper contributed to the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, and reprinted at my request as editor, in the journal of the *British Archæological Association*, I am much indebted for all information concerning this interesting house.

The castle has two quadrangles, the chapel of St. Mary's, and a large fifteenth century barn called the Grange. On each side of the ancient doorway are Elizabethan buildings in the northern quadrangle. Mrs. Dent added to them. The west side of the southern quadrangle was built by Ralph Sudeley about 1436. On the east is the twelfth century embattled tower and the ruins of a noble banqueting-hall erected in 1456. The castle is filled with beautiful old furniture, pictures, and relics of the past, mainly collected by Mrs. Dent, who accomplished so much for her beautiful home and its neighbourhood.

IV

Burford, Painswick and Prinknash Park

AT the other end of the Cotswold country is the beautiful little town of Burford, the gem of the Cotswolds. No wonder that "Sylvanus Urban," otherwise Dean Beeching, sings of its charm :

Oh fair is Moreton in the marsh
And Stow on the wide wold,
Yet fairer far is Burford town
With its stone roofs grey and old ;
And whether the sky be hot and high,
Or rain fall thin and chill,
The grey old town on the lonely down
Is where I would be still.

O broad and smooth the Avon flows
By Stratford's many piers ;
And Shakespeare lies by Avon side
These thrice a hundred years ;
But I would be where Windrush sweet
Laves Burford's lovely hill,
The grey old town on the lonely down
Is where I would be still.

It is unlike any other place, this quaint old Burford, a right pleasing place when the sun is pouring its beams upon the fantastic creations of the builders of long ago, and when the moon is full there is no place in England which surpasses it in picturesqueness. It is very quiet and still now, but there was a time when Burford cloth, Burford wool, Burford stone,



Burford, Church Porch

Burford malt, and Burford saddles were renowned throughout the land. Did not the townsfolk present two of its famous saddles to "Dutch William" when he came to Burford with the view of ingratiating himself into the affections of his subjects before an important general election? It has been the scene of battles. Not far off is Battle Edge, where the fierce kings of Wessex and Mercia fought in 720 A.D. on Midsummer Eve, in commemoration of which the good folks of Burford used to carry a dragon up and down the streets, the great dragon of Wessex. Perhaps the origin of this procession dates back to early pagan days before the battle was fought, but tradition connects it with the fight. Memories cluster thickly around one as you walk up the old street. It was the first place in England to receive the privilege of a merchant guild. The gaunt Earl of Warwick, the king maker, owned the place, and appropriated to himself the credit of erecting the almshouses, though Henry Bird gave the money. You can still see the earl's signature at the foot of the document relating to this foundation—R. Warrewych—the only signature known save one at Belvoir. You can see the beautifully restored Burford Priory. It is not the conventual building wherein the monks lived in pre-Reformation days and served God in the grand old church that is Burford's chief glory. Edmund Harman, the royal barber-surgeon, received a grant of the priory from Henry VIII for curing him from a severe illness. Then Sir Laurence Tanfield, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, owned it, and married a Burford lady, Elizabeth Cobbe. An aged correspondent tells me that in the days of her youth there was standing a house called Cobb Hall, evidently the former residence of Lady Tanfield's family. Sir Laurence built a grand Elizabethan mansion on the site of the old priory, and here was born Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, who was slain in Newbury fight. That Civil War brought stirring times to Burford. The Levellers, the discontented mutineers in Cromwell's army, the followers

of John Lilburne, for a brief space threatened the existence of the Parliamentary régime. Cromwell dealt with them with an iron hand. He caught and surprised them at Burford and imprisoned them in the church, wherein carved roughly on the font with a dagger you can see this touching memorial of one of these poor men :

ANTHONY SEDLEY PRISNER, 1649.

Three of the leaders were shot in the churchyard on the following morning in view of the other prisoners, who were placed on the leaden roof of the church, and you can still see the bullet-holes in the old wall against which the unhappy men were placed. The following entries in the books of the church tell the sad story tersely :

Burials.—“ 1649, Three soldiers shot to death in Burford Churchyard, May 17th.”

“ Pd. to Daniel Muncke for cleansinge the Church when the Levellers were taken, 3s. 4d.”

A walk through the streets of the old town is refreshing to an antiquary's eyes. The stone buildings grey with age with tile roofs, the old Tolsey much restored, the merchants' guild mark over many of the ancient doorways, the noble church with its eight chapels and fine tombs, the plate of the old corporation, now in custody of its oldest surviving member (Burford has ceased to be an incorporated borough), are all full of interest. Vandalism is not, however, quite lacking, even in Burford. One of the few Gothic chimneys remaining, a gem with a crocketed and pinnacled canopy, was taken down some thirty years ago. In the coaching age the town was alive with traffic, and Burford races, established by the Merry Monarch, brought it much gaiety. At the “George Inn,” now degraded from its old estate and cut up into tenements, Charles I stayed. It was an inn for more than a century before his time, and was only converted from that purpose during the early years of the nineteenth century, when the pro-

prietor of the "Bull Inn" bought it up and closed its doors to the public with a view to improving the prosperity of his own house. The restoration of the picturesque almshouses founded by Henry Bird in the time of the King-maker, a difficult piece of work, was well carried out in the decadent days of the "twenties," and happily they do not seem to have suffered much in the process.

When I first knew the priory it was in a sorry state. The walls seemed very insecure. The windows were all gone and garden frames were propped up to keep out the rain. The staircase leaned perilously from the wall, and if you had courage to ascend, you were obliged to cling close to the wall lest your weight should bring down the whole structure. It was a sad, melancholy ruin. Happily a rescuer was found. The property was bought by Major Le Tessier and restored to its former beauty, and it is now as fair an example of a late Tudor house as you would wish to see. All lovers of English domestic architecture will be grateful for this splendid restoration.

I have known Burford many years, long before it was "discovered" by wandering antiquaries. It has now become "fashionable," and everybody has been writing about it and praising it from Dean Bushing to Archdeacon Hutton and Mr. H. A. Evans. But it is difficult to over-praise it. At some periods of its career it was not always the "sleepy hollow" that it is now, and the archdeacon who in spite of the faithful discharge of his archidiaconal duties has evidently an eye for sporting days and sporting ways, tells at some length the story of Burford racing, when large crowds assembled and strolling players brought their companies, and young Oxford men rode in the races and the "First gentlemen in Europe" patronized them, and all the first sporting aristocracy of the day were present, and the "Bull Inn" was the scene of prolonged revelry. Has not "Nimrod" told us all about it, and has not an archdeacon recalled

these sporting scenes? But all this sparkle of "life" vanished long ago, when the railways left Burford high and dry, and the racing fraternity sought other scenes for their sport, business or pastime.

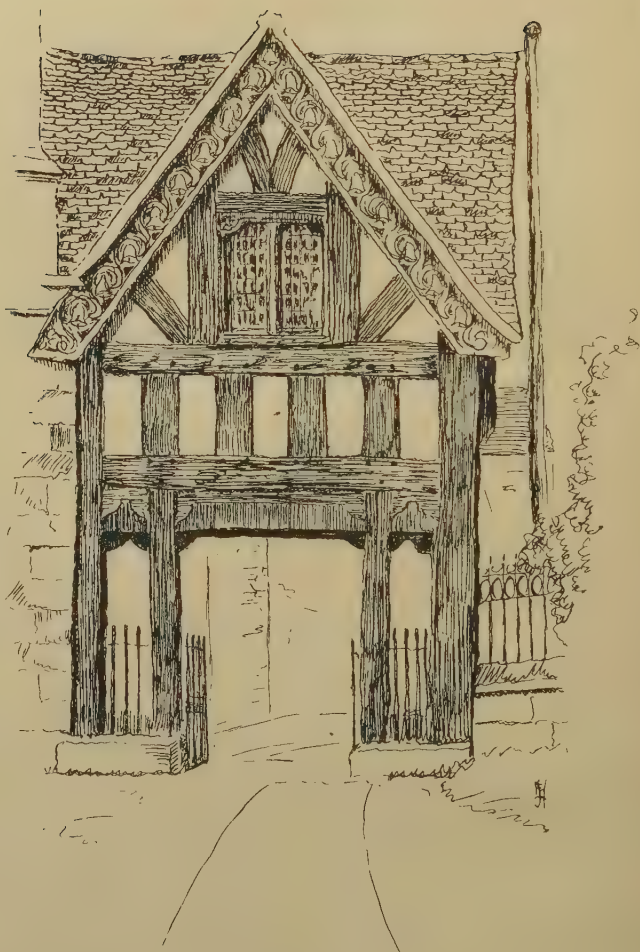
* * * * *

Returning from our wanderings we still find ourselves on Birdlip Hill. Let the motorist beware how he drives down it on the way to Gloucester, and his machine must be a good hill-climber who would attempt to ride up it. He would do well to make a detour to the right and climb by a longer and less steep ascent. The name of our hill sounds very rural, but the learned assert that it is not derived from any sweet songster of the grove, but from a dread Danish warrior, Bythar Lipr, whose name if you are skilled in etymology you can easily transform into Birdlip. This hill has not been entirely free from historical incident. Indeed before the dawn of history there are remains of neolithic folk in the long barrow that still exists. It lies, as I have said, on the Ermine Way, and has therefore seen countless Roman legionaries marching on to Gloucester and back to Cirencester. The baggage of the luckless and worthless King Edward II was captured by the opposing barons on its height, and doubtless many other events I wot not of have occurred here on this elevated spot.

Before descending the hill to Cheltenham it is advisable to visit Painswick, and on the way is Prinknash Park (which is on the lower road from Cheltenham to Painswick), where on one occasion we were welcomed by the kind owner, Mr. Dyer-Edwards. In mediæval times, ere monasteries were destroyed, this house was the property of the abbots of St. Peter's, Gloucester. It is mentioned as early as 1381 in a chartulary of the abbey in connexion with "the beech where the robber was hanged"; and still earlier in 1355 when Edward III granted to the abbey the right of hunting in those parts of Buckholt which has since acquired the name of Prinknash Park.

The abbot's house was enlarged between 1520 and 1525, and the south-west wing, the drawing-room, kitchen and pantries, belong to that period. The oriel window in the old dining-room with its fan-tracery is a charming example of Abbot Parker's work. A Tudor rose is in the centre of the ceiling in the dining-hall, surmounted by a falcon and fetter-lock, the badge of the House of York, showing that the house was built in the fifteenth century. This badge probably commemorates a visit paid here by Elizabeth, Queen of Henry VII. Other royal visits have been paid to this house, and in the window of the drawing-room are the royal cognizance of Queen Katherine of Aragon, the arms of Abbot Parker, and of Henry VIII impaling those of his consort. After the dissolution of the monastery the house was granted to Edmund Bridges (or Brigys or Brydges) who belonged to the family which held Sudeley Castle. Since that time it has passed through several ownerships, the Bridgmans, Howells and Ackers, until it was acquired by the present owner who has greatly improved the house, the interesting chapel and grounds.

Continuing the journey we must visit Painswick which is a remarkably charming little town, dear to the lover of old customs, as there the custom of "clipping churches" is regularly observed on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8). The people march in procession round the church and then join hands and form a ring round it, and a "clipping sermon" is preached. The churchyard has some clipped yews, ninety-nine in number, which are ceremoniously clipped on this same day. The townsfolk have sometimes desired to complete the hundred, but Fate or some spiritual law has decreed that there shall only be ninety-nine, and the newly planted tree always dies. Such is the tradition; but if you are pleased to count them I think you will find that their number exceeds the hundred. The lich-gate looks old, but it is quite modern, although the timbers are



Pattiswick

ancient and came from the belfry. The tower and spire of the church stand out above the encircling yews, and with the rest of the building were raised in the fifteenth century when in all this Cotswold district times were prosperous and the wool-trade flourishing. There is nothing very remarkable in the interior, save to note that the alabaster effigies of Dr. Seaman, diocesan chancellor, and of his wife, have been permitted to supplant the brass and tomb of Sir William Kingston who was a favourite of Henry VIII, and Constable of the Tower when Anne Boleyn was beheaded. The Kingstons were great people in Painswick, and lords of the manor, and Sir Anthony, the son of Sir William, was a stern dispenser of justice and a severe suppresser of the opponents of Protestantism. The pilgrimage of grace in the north, the rebellion in the west, on account of the "New Religion," gave him opportunities for the exercise of his peculiar talents; and the setting up of gallows and the hanging of rebels and rioters afforded him much satisfaction. On account of the enclosures of lands in 1549 there was much disturbance and rioting. So Sir Anthony set up a gallows at Sheepscombe near Painswick and his house Ebworth, and made a prison in the town. Moreover Rudder records that he had such confidence in his methods that for the good of posterity he bequeathed three estates, since called Gallows-lands, one for maintaining the gallows, a second to keep two ladders in readiness, and a third to provide halters; and an acre of land was assigned to the tithingman of Sheepscombe to compensate him for carrying out the duties of hangman.

Painswick has many delightful old houses built in true Cotswold style. One of the best is the Court House built at the end of Elizabeth's reign, wherein King Charles held his court. He was here on two occasions before and after his attempt to relieve the siege of Gloucester. This house is on the south of the church, and near it is the home of the historian of Painswick, Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, who has

recorded all that can be said about the place in his valuable work *A Cotswold Manor*. The town is peaceful now. It had exciting times in the Civil War when a skirmish took place in this quiet churchyard. A company of Roundheads resisted an attack of the Cavaliers, and took refuge in the church, but the Royalists compelled them to surrender by firing the doors and "casting in hand-grenadoes," quite after the fashion of modern methods of warfare.

And so we leave the quiet town and travel along this spur of the Cotswolds past Birdlip and run down hill into Cheltenham. It is easy riding all the way with glorious views on the left as we descend into the famous watering-place, where I propose to end our journey.



V

Cheltenham

CHELTEHAM is usually regarded as a modern town, knowing no history earlier than the date of the discovery of its healing springs. But its name occurs in the Domesday Survey, in which a church is mentioned, and the present venerable church dispels all doubts with regard to its antiquity. It was mainly constructed in the thirteenth century, though the lower part of the central tower and part of the west wall of the nave are Transitional Norman. You can still see the blocked-up doorways that led to the rood-loft, and can trace the later insertions of windows in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the fine late Perpendicular porch with its lierne vaulting and parvis, and much else that deserves attention. The town has some fine streets and many Georgian houses. The High Street is the main thoroughfare, and the charming Promenade the chief attraction. It seems to recall the days when Cheltenham rivalled the glories of Bath and entertained strange company which I shall endeavour to describe. Now that German spas are closed to English visitors, and probably for ever closed, we may find that English watering-places are quite as efficacious and pleasant as their foreign rivals.

The well-known epitaph—

Here I lie and my two daughters ;
We died from drinking Cheltenham waters,



Cheltenham. The Devils Chimney

like many others, lied. The rhyme was current in 1824, but no such inscription to the memory of the unhappy drinkers was then known to exist. It was doubtless the invention of some miserable practitioner of Bath or Leamington, who was jealous of the fame of the Cheltenham spa, where so many flocked to "quaff the springs which the earth here so bountifully provided" as good Dr. Fosbroke so eloquently describes this "fount of Hygeia." Indeed, if we are to credit the opinion of this fashionable physician of the Gloucestershire wells, Cheltenham had in the year of grace 1824 already "stripped Bath of its gaudy day," and obtained pre-eminence over most other British watering-places, not only on account of its salubrious rides and walks, or its bold Cotswold air, but mainly by reason of "the potent charm of its moral as much as of its natural advantages." The "moral" advantages of the town in its palmy days seem to have been a little doubtful.

It seems to have been a common practice of the doctors at these watering-places to write a book on the excellence of the waters and their superiority over all others, of the wonderful cures wrought by them, and the treatment to be adopted. In spite of the advice of an old stager at Bath to a young friend who was about to settle in the City of the Springs, "Whatever you do, my dear fellow, do not begin by writing a book on the Bath waters"—in spite of Dr. Fosbroke's abuse of such works as "mere *enfants perdus* of literature," as "scrimble-scramble bathotic compositions that serve no other purpose than to support the first strokes of a weak swimmer in the vortex," he did not fail to copy the example of his *confrères*. Nay, he went one better. He persuaded his learned father, the Rev. T. D. Fosbroke, M.A., F.A.S., Honorary Associate of the Royal Society of Literature, Honorary Member of the Bristol Philosophical Institution, and the author of many goodly volumes, to write a Picturesque and Topographical Account of Cheltenham as an introduction to his own Medical History of the Waters. Nor did the father fail to give a nice

little "puff" to his son, of whom he wrote: "The Essay on the Waters, by the Author's son, will, he hopes, evince his application to the science of his profession and good taste in literature." It is all very nice and proper and useful to the resident surgeon at Cheltenham; and it will also be useful to us who desire to know something of the fashionable life of the place when it was in the vogue, and of the habits and customs of the good folk who thronged the wells.

Cheltenham was but a poor little place before the discovery of the waters. This happened in 1716 when a Mr. Mason bought the ground which contained the original spring; and observing that flocks of pigeons regularly frequented the spot to feed on the saline particles, and that frost never affected its flow, he made inquiries, and then built a small thatched shed over the spring, the water of which began to be used as a medicine. From this lowly beginning the Great Temple of Health grew. Mason's son-in-law, Captain Skillicorne, built a pump room and reared a square brick building over the spring, paved the court and laid out the grounds with trees and upper and lower walks. The fame of the waters soon began to attract visitors and invalids. In 1759 there were "a great number of commodious lodgings for the reception of the company," which a few years later was estimated at four hundred and seventy. King George III honoured the place with a visit in 1788 and resided at Fauconberg House. His Majesty's servants played at cricket, the king having sent to London for bats and balls, lest they should sicken for want of exercise. The Highman Palantine, a noted conjurer, performed before the royal family. He requested the king to cut a bit of silk out of the Queen's gown, with which request his majesty very condescendingly complied, and the juggler in an instant replaced it.

The visit of the king increased the popularity of the town, and we find a large increase in the number of the inhabitants. The population was nearly doubled between the years 1811 and

1821. Bettison's History and Visitor's Guide reveals to us vast improvements; and no less than five spas and pump rooms. There is the royal old well, a grand establishment with its well walk. "The unexampled beauty of this noble vista is allowed to excel any other in the world, shaded by an uniform plantation of aspiring elms, preventing any inconvenience from the sun in the hottest weather." At a short distance stands the renowned and far-famed structure called the Montpellier Pump Room, opened in 1808, the Sherborne Pump Room, Barrett's Chalybeate Spa and Fowler's Chalybeate Spa at the bottom of Cambray Street.

We cannot forbear to quote the delightful description of the early morning parade in these rooms where most excellent bands of music performed and "no sooner has the sun begun to absorb the cool dews and the whole sky to be animated with its warmth and influence—no sooner has the lark ceased his first morning carol, and the general choir of birds succeeded, than the 'busy hum' commences at the wells. Between six and seven the walks begin to be filled, and from seven to nine they are crowded. Here may be seen a galaxy of beauty which overpowers even Aurora herself. Here the sparkling eye—the bewitching mien—the elegant costume which fascinated all beholders at the evening ball—assumes an altered character. The warm glow of the midnight dancer is exchanged for the fresh tint of the morning. The brilliant robe, the necklace, the ear-drop, and the head-dress, are transformed into an easier, a simpler and more becoming attire." Surely life could not be weary in this noted town when the day began with such a rare display of beauty and fashion.

But you will want to know how you can reach this delectable place. There is a grand service of mails and coaches. From the "Plough Hotel" the mails start for London, Gloucester, Milford, Oxford, Henley and Carmarthen, morning and evening, and coaches to all parts of the kingdom. From the "Royal" the Magnet starts daily at 6.30 a.m., and takes

you to the Gloucester Coffee House, Piccadilly, London, in eleven hours, passing through Henley; and the Veteran through Wycombe at 8 a.m., to the "Bull and Mouth Inn," London. The Traveller goes to Bristol to the "Plume of Feathers," Wine Street. The York House Coach to Bath, and also the Alert, and the Paragon at 7.45 a.m., to Malvern. The "George," too, has its string of well-horsed coaches, including the Royal Veteran, the White Hart, the Phoenix, Hibernia and the Columbia which will take you to Leamington, Warwick and Stratford and bring you back in the evening. So if you are weary of the place it would not be difficult to escape from it.

But how could any one weary of Cheltenham which furnishes us with such attractions as balls, routs, theatres, library-lounges, shopping and promenading? The *diurnal* of a regular frequenter of the town would be as follows: From seven to nine he would go to the wells and then enjoy the sights and sounds which we have tried vainly to describe; from ten to eleven, breakfast and medical consultations; from eleven to one, auctions at the Rooms where he will find a large and varied assortment of books, Colebrook-Dale ware, paintings, ladies' apparel or jewellery, displayed for sale. Or if he be of a literary turn of mind he would adjourn to Bettison's Library in the High Street. It is a marvellous place. The proprietor tells us that this Library has lately received an accession of several thousand volumes of scarce works, collected by Mr. Bettison, who has also successfully exerted his taste in the embellishment of its interior—its situation is most eligible—its accommodations are superior—and its various stores of learning exhaustless. Whether it be the sublime labour of divinity, the steady works of philosophy, the true portraiture of history, the poetical effusions of imagination, or the fancy-fraught productions of romance, here is the chaste receptacle of ancient and modern genius. The unwearied assiduity and skill of the proprietor, in col-

lecting select works and miscellanies, cause a variety of volumes, in every language, to excite the curiosity of the connoisseur, or impart instruction. The reading-room, which is eighty feet in length, and supported by Doric pillars, is terminated by a shrubbery, which tends to produce that serenity of mind so adapted to contemplation—indeed everything that constitutes the comfort of a library is here concentrated. Upwards of one hundred London, Irish, Welsh and provincial papers, are taken in weekly, which, with the most esteemed and popular new publications, are continually on the table for the subscriber's inspection. The most strict attention is proffered, whilst fashion and polite manners impose the greatest silence. The spirited proprietor has established a series of musical entertainments, assisted by able professors, when the gardens are brilliantly lighted with gas, and occasionally a grand display of fireworks.

If from this scene of refined splendour one might transport oneself into the dreary present, we should like to compare the bookshop of Mr. Bettison with that of a modern seller of books. Imagine a band, illuminations and fireworks (!) as attractions to a bookshop in the present day. Perhaps we may take a leaf out of Mr. Bettison's book, and bring prosperity to the book trade. Nor was he quite singular. If you went to the library of Mr. Williams, at the eastern corner of the Assembly Rooms—"a fashionable lounge for the gay, the youthful, the philosopher, or the devotee of pleasure which could boast of the assemblage of ancient and modern genius, foreign and domestic," you would hear the strains of a band playing regularly twice a week. Again at Duffield and Weller's Literary Saloon—"supplied in every department from the first-rate metropolitan houses, the Montpellier band plays every Monday and Friday afternoons during the season to enliven the scene. The Proprietors have established a series of *Soirées Musicales* and brilliant illuminations at the Montpellier Spas, which meet general approval." Miss Roberts

at 370, High Street, and Mr. Porter in the Arcade, will also supply you with books ; and Mr. Harper's Repository of Arts in the High Street in addition to a Reading-Room has a great variety of drawings and prints which are lent to copy by the week, month, or year.

The attractions of the bookshops has drawn us away from our diary of an habitué, who would spend his hours from one to three in the billiard-rooms or revisit Bettison's. From three to five he would devote his time to the ladies " tooling nymphs of fashion over the stones or in a drag, from a Stanhope to a four-in-hand, up and down the High Street." At six he dines. The evening amusements are diversified. The Assembly Rooms, erected in 1816, under the patronage of the Duke of Wellington, to commemorate the glorious battle of Waterloo, are now the " rendezvous of fashion. The orchestra on the right is handsomely arranged and beautifully embellished with emblematic figures. A spacious gallery embraces the north side where spectators are admitted on public occasions. The south side has a superbly painted window of immense size and richly diversified. Six massive chandeliers, of costly and exquisite workmanship suspended from the ceiling light this noble and stately apartment, which is acknowledged by persons of taste and fashion to stand unrivalled. The upper suite of rooms are perfectly select, with the necessary appendages of Tea, Card, Promenade, Billiard and Reading apartments, with every other essential convenience, calculated to lull the 'dull hours' of time. There is also a Club Room, recently established, which is attended by the first persons of rank and consequence."

During the summer on Mondays there is a ball, on Tuesday, cards and the theatre ; on Wednesday, dress card assembly ; on Thursday, cards and the theatre ; on Friday, a ball, and on Saturday, cards and the play at the theatre. We are told that " the established rules of decorum are now become so

generally known, that it is deemed redundant to repeat them." But we should like to have known the Beau Brummell of Cheltenham who enforced the rules and made an efficient Master of Ceremonies.¹

The theatre is not connected with the rooms. It is in High Street where the respectable managers, Messrs. Yates & Farley, have "long been celebrated as public caterers of dramatic genius." First-rate performers appear there, as the theatre is in "the focus of the metropolitan circle." Plays did not last long, and you had the evening before you. At nine the regular frequenter would go to Bettison's or Williams's if he did not go to the Rooms, and probably at ten attend a rout. Do you know what that is? One of our scribes shall describe it. "A singing lady at a corner of a room, an array of standing or seated listeners, two or three card-tables, tea and coffee, perhaps quadrilles; silence broken by the footman bawling at the door the names of every party as they arrive; flirting and ogling, wine, cakes, ices, confectionery, etc., and off! On such occasions drawing rooms are sometimes so overflowed that the superfluities are deposited on the stair-cases." Miss Dorothy Sketch, in the *Cheltenham Mail Bag*, describes Mrs. Thingummie's rout in apt verse:

Sure all the world, love, was there,
So crowded—you scarce can imagine, my dear;
The grave and sedate at whist, commerce or loo,
Were fixt in their chairs—and the fair De Lihu
Was warbling those strains of enchantment and joy
That thrill every bosom and brighten each eye;
Preparing the soul—says some learned physician,
For the fever of love, by a predisposition.

If you weary of the crush we will walk and smoke "segars," or the Rooms will provide you with "fascinating games,"

¹ His name was Marshall. The writer of the *Cheltenham Mail Bag* gives a line "*Marshall*ed in Fashion's proud array," and adds a note: "I can scarcely think the crude Acerbus given to punning, or I should imagine this was a play upon the name of the worthy and assiduous Master of Ceremonies."

e.g. hazard, l'écarte, blind-hookey, etc., followed by emptied pockets, distracted minds, morning horrors, agitated nerves, loosened principles, etc. Sharks are plentiful in Cheltenham, and show much prowling activity, shunning any regular industry and labour, and showing much eagerness in their designs on the pockets of others.

We must not forget the Race-week which falls in the third week in July. The races are run on Cleeve Downs and last three days. Amongst the chief supporters are Lords Sherborne, Ducie, Sir Henry Lippencott, the Berkeleys, Messrs. West, Mitton and Benson. Well crammed hotels, profusions of gambling, balls and plays are natural consequences. Amongst the company on the course you would see Fry in his cap with the cry, "Royal dandy-candy now selling off," Mister Punch, shyers of sticks at snuffboxes, minstrels chanting "the roving soldier," or "the Westbury cocking," or "Indeed I lost my love, she took the black veil," sung by a very pathetic fellow, and spring heales and white-headed Bob sparring, and much else of a curious sort of fun.

From such scenes of wild excitement we will turn to the cultivation of the arts and discover Mr. Millet and Mr. Dinsdale who have acquired just celebrity, the one in miniature and historical painting, the other in landscape. Mr. Thewenetti is a struggling miniature painter and Mr. Gubbins has put forth some fair specimens of the brilliancy, high colouring and effect of the English school in portrait painting, but alas! the public encouragement of the arts in Cheltenham is mean.

The social structure does not seem to be very secure. There is a great show of outward magnificence, but there is a dearth of capital, and much of the business is carried on upon a system of credit and accommodation, involving often failures and alarming fluctuations of fortune. The apparent splendour and prosperity of the town remind one of our scribes of the tales of houses, trees and people in the *Spectator*, which appeared solid and real at a distance, but vanished at approach.

The lodging-house keepers did not bear a very good character. They were guilty of practising a system of petty plunder and exaction. Their disgusting subjection, odious pertness and mercenary treatment, brought discredit on themselves and were injurious to the place. I regret to have to report that the silence of the night is in no place more frequently broken by a string of Bacchanalians serpentining homewards with an *opera-buffa* clamour than Cheltenham.

Science and literature did not find a congenial home in the pleasure-loving crowd. There were no societies which fostered these studies, but the town had its local newspaper, *Griffith's Chronicle*, that saw the light each Wednesday, and of which the poet sang :

After my death I wish no other herald
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.

Its character is thus ably described : "it is temperate in opinion, charitable in principle, authentic in information, and well spoken without sycophancy." Could any one wish for more ? Yet there is, alas ! occasionally too much fripping of verbiage and indiscriminate praise in the local criticisms. Amongst its contributors were "One Unknown," Archimedes, and a

Rogue, a wag, his name is ——
A notable dissembling lad, a crack.

But the poet's corner is the "bag o' the bee." The choicest ensamples of wild honey are recognized under the signatures of W. L. Bowles, W. H. H. and Rubens, the author of *Tendrils*, a poet of excellent juvenile pretensions. The paper is "a print of talent, and sparkles with *jeux d'esprit*, corns of true salt," and evidently well adapted to enliven the company at the Wells. The town boasted of another newspaper, entitled the *Cheltenham Journal*, but of this we have no information.

The religious life of the gay visitors may not have been very serious, but it was the mode to attend Divine Service

on Sundays, and they had a great choice of places of worship. There was the old parish church, a fine structure, cruciform, with a tower and high spire in the centre of the cross. It had a musical peal of eight bells which were rung whenever any distinguished visitor came to the town. The church had a grand tier of double galleries at the west end according to the hideous fashion of the time. But this was not sufficient to accommodate all the crowd of visitors. Hence a new church, dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, was erected in 1823, in the "modern style of architecture," where the Rev. F. Close preached eloquent sermons which were published and sold at Bettison's Library. Persons of various denominations had no difficulty in finding chapels. There was the Cheltenham chapel, Bethel, the Countess of Huntingdon's, Roman Catholic, Quakers', and Ebenezer, all built at the beginning of the last century to meet the demands of the visitors.

As at Bath, so at Cheltenham, sedan chairs were in constant use by the fashionable ladies. The chairmen were authorized to charge you sixpence for carrying you 250 yards, and you could travel thus luxuriously for a mile for two shillings; but after twelve o'clock at night the fares were doubled. If you were shopping or paying calls you could detain your sedan chair for ten minutes or upwards, according to the length of your journey, without any extra charge. Very strict rules were laid down with regard to the conduct of the chairmen. They were not allowed to demand "tips," or to decline to carry any⁹ fare when called, or to use abusive language or to be in liquor when employed, under a penalty of a heavy fine or suspension from using their chair. They were a troublesome race, these sedan chairmen and perhaps needed these stringent regulations.

Of the fair dames who were carried in these sedan chairs from dinner to rout and gay assembly ball we know little. If I mistake not the immortal Becky Sharp visited Cheltenham and much enjoyed its hospitality. Certainly that most

jovial and hospitable of old vestals, Miss Crawley came here after she had eaten and drunk a great deal too much during the London season. If we had time and space we might open *The Cheltenham Mail Bag*, edited by Peter Quince the younger, a *nom de plume* for William Cobbett, which saw the light in 1820, and learn much of the aristocratic visitors, but perhaps I should be trespassing too much upon your patience, and the old-fashioned humour and jest somewhat palls.

The most important members of the Society of the Wells we have left to the last. These were the doctors. There were no less than a dozen physicians, half-a-dozen surgeons, a dozen surgeons and apothecaries. Several of the first named were Physicians Extraordinary to the King, such as Dr. Boisragon, Dr. Christie, and Dr. Newell. Sir A. Faulker was Physician to H.H. the Duke of Sussex, and Dr. Gibney had amongst his patients H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland. But the most famous name connected with Cheltenham medical history is that of Dr. Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination. At the beginning of the nineteenth century he was the sole physician of note in the town. He resided during the season at first in the lower part of the High Street, and then at No. 8, in St. George's Place; the rest of the year was spent in his beloved Berkeley, where his brother was rector. He received from Parliament for his discovery £30,000, and in spite of his success he remained the simple, kindly-hearted doctor who could not be tempted to wander further than Cheltenham from his dear "blackbirds at Berkeley." In the charmingly sublime language of the period, in which we have been reveling, we are told:

"He might have spread his pinions upon the favouring gales of popularity, and built his aërie in the lofty cliffs of ambition, but he preferred the amiable tranquility of the retired songsters of the grove, and made his nest with the dove. He delighted in home, and home among persons of such habits as his were, is commonly a temple of virtue, sentiment and reason. Luxuries and frivolities were not to

him Lares and Penates, indispensable household gods, to whom an idolatrous service is paid."¹

In the light of such fame the biographies of such men of genius as Dr. Jameson, who died in 1824, having written a book on the Cheltenham waters and Dr. Creaser, who wrote biographies of Jenner and Parry, may be passed over in silence. But we cannot fight the immortal genius of Dr. Fosbroke, the author who wrote his guide "rather for the amusement and peace which pursuits of a calm and retiring nature produce, than for any fame or high employment which they can bring." Not for him is "the dry and barren style," considered by some inferior minds as most suited for medical tradition. Are not the coarsest weeds floriferous, and is the aloe less medicinal for bearing a blossom? He has collected these "fugitive observations fixt with a Cretan note, in such hours as could be consecrated to the Egerian grotto of thought," and they form "a kind of foliage which springs at such times from the prolific budding and shooting of the mind." No desire of popularity prompted him to write his book, no wish to bring more patients to his door. Birds of carrion care not for the perfumes of literature. In every country and every profession the authors have been the greatest men. Other professional men who have not written books are like certain predatory animals which return nothing to the soil whence they derive nurture. "At all events, the time has not arrived when intelligence will suffer itself to be smothered up from the light by the base contagious clouds of invidious censoriousness." With these admirable sentiments we will take leave of our guide and of "the present Baia of Great Britain," echoing the wish so admirably expressed, "Long may it flourish, ere like the luxurious retirement of the ancient masters of the world, it become a pile of mutilated ruins."

¹ Masonic Jennerian Sermon by the Rev. T. D. Fosbroke.

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